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The theological works of the
first viscount Barrington

THE
THEOLOGICAL WORKS
OF
THE FIRST
VISCOUNT BARRINGTON,

INCLUDING
THE MISCELLANEA SACRA,
THE ESSAY ON THE DISPENSATIONS,
AND
HIS CORRESPONDENCE WITH DR. LARDNER,
NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED,
A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,
WITH
A BRIEF MEMOIR OF HIS SON, SHUTE BARRINGTON,
THE LATE BISHOP OF DURHAM,
BY THE REV. GEO. TOWNSEND, M.A.
PREBENDARY OF DURHAM, AND VICAR OF NORTHALLERTON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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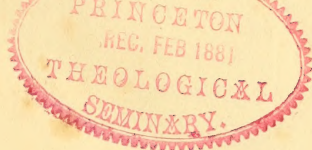
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A FAITHFUL MEMOIR OF HIS LORDSHIP
THE LATE BISHOP OF ELY
BY THE REV. GEO. TOWNSEND, M.A.
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BISHOP AND HIS SUCCESSORS

IN THREE VOLUMES
VOL. II
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ESSAY II.

ON THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN APOSTLES,
ELDERS, AND BRETHREN.

PART I.—ON THE APOSTLES.

SECTION I.—*Design of the following Essay ; and on the powers granted to the Apostles in their first commission.*

BECAUSE the appellation of apostles, elders, and brethren, occurs often separately in the New Testament ;—and the famous letter which is mentioned Acts xv. 23, is represented as going from them jointly (as comprehending the whole church at Jerusalem) to the brethren which were of the Gentiles, in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia : because it is of so much consequence also to the right understanding the New Testament, to understand the character of an apostle ; and of so much difficulty to understand what is meant by an elder in this text—and it being impossible to know what is meant by brethren without understanding what is meant by the other two—I have thought it might be of some use to con-

sider each of them by themselves: and then briefly to consider the state of the church at that time, as far as their acting together on this occasion will open it unto us. By which we may better comprehend not only what is meant by each of these characters, but what was the state of the Christian church in the early times of the apostles.

The first time we meet with the name of apostles, is Luke vi. 12, 13, “ And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus went into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God; and when it was day, He called unto him His disciples, and of them He chose twelve, whom He also named apostles:” designing to send them to preach the kingdom of God. Our Saviour praying all night before His choice (or spending the whole night “ in an house of prayer”), might perhaps be directed by God, whom to choose for this high and important office: for Jesus says in His prayer to God, speaking of the twelve, “ those that thou hast given me I have kept.”¹ And Peter declares, “ the witnesses to whom Christ shewed Himself openly, were chosen of God;”² and for this reason St. Paul, who was not one whit behind the chiefest of the apostles, calls himself “ an apostle of God,” as well as of Christ,” in most

¹ John xvii. 6. 9. 12.

² Acts x. 41.

of his epistles : ¹ and asserts, that “ God had separated him for this work from his mother’s womb.” ² He probably alluded to his separation, as a Pharisee (who pretended to be separated from the rest of mankind by their greater sanctity) ; as he likewise says, that Ananias told him, “ that the God of our fathers had chosen him.” ³ Some time after Jesus had chosen His twelve disciples, “ He called them together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases, and sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and heal the sick.” ⁴ St. Mark gives us much the same account of Christ’s choosing them ; ⁵ and St. Matthew and St. Mark of Christ’s sending them ; ⁶ but St. Matthew takes no notice of Christ’s choosing them. Thus however we see they were to go “ and preach the kingdom of God : ” or at least to preach the kingdom of God so far as to say “ it was at hand.” ⁷ And therefore as John Baptist had only preached, that “ the kingdom of heaven ” (or the kingdom that God was setting up in the world under Christ, the kingdom foretold by Daniel, ⁸ understood by the Jews, and expected by the world, as Mr. Sykes has with great labour and skill proved to be the meaning of

¹ 1 Cor. i. 1. 2 Cor. i. 1. Gal. i. 1. Eph. i. 1. Col. i. 1.

1 Tim. i. 1. 2 Tim. i. 1. Tit. i. 1.

² Gal. i. 15.

³ Acts xxii. 14.

⁴ Luke ix. 42.

⁵ Mark iii. 13—16.

⁶ Matt. x. 1. Mark vi. 7—12.

⁷ Matt. x. 7.

⁸ Dan. vii. 13, 14.

this, and the like phrases, in every text of the New Testament where they occur) was at hand :”¹ So Jesus Himself preaches in the same terms,² and orders His apostles to preach in the very same also ; suitably to the prayer He afterwards instructed them in, “ Thy kingdom come :”³ and He not only taught, but (as John did) baptized men into the faith “ that the Messiah was to be made manifest ;⁴ or, that the kingdom of heaven was at hand.”⁵ It is at least most probable, that when Christ baptized by His disciples,⁶ He baptized men into the same faith that John Baptist did : for it cannot be supposed, that He ordered His disciples to baptize them into His own name, as the Messiah, when He never published that He was the Messiah Himself, and forbid His disciples to divulge it till He was risen from the dead.⁷ We may better understand what the apostles were commissioned to preach, by what St. Mark informs us of the manner in which they executed that commission ; which was by “ going out, and preaching that men should repent.” Or we may put the account of the commission and of the execution together : and then it will be, that Jesus sent them to preach, “ that men should

¹ Matt. iii. 1.² Ibid. iv. 17.³ Luke xi. 2.⁴ John i. 31.⁵ Matt. iii. 16.⁶ John iii. 22.⁷ Matt. xvi. 20. xvii. 9. Luke ix. 20, 21.

repent, "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Which is the substance of what John Baptist and Jesus Himself had preached before.¹ And as John Baptist exhorted men to repentance, by preaching remission of sins if men did repent,² it is most highly probable, that the doctrine of remission of sins was then preached by the apostles also, in virtue of this commission, as the great motive to repentance; and seems to be included in what St. Mark shortly says, that "they preached that men should repent."

To give credit to what they said, Christ gave them power over all devils and diseases;³ He gives them this power and authority; or He assures them, that when they had faith, or a full persuasion, that He would cast out devils, and heal diseases, on their using His name, in confirmation of the truth of the message on which He sent them, diseases should be healed, and the devils cast out. St. Matthew adds to the power of the commission, "to heal the lepers;"⁴ but that is only specifying one of the diseases to be healed, which, considering it in all its circumstances, was one of the very worst to which men were at that time subject; and which, perhaps, the Jews thought nothing but the power of God could heal; and which they expected would be one of the diseases that

¹ Matt. iii. 1. iv. 17. ² Mark i. 5. ³ Luke ix. 1.

⁴ Matt. x. 8.

should be healed in the days of the Messiah.¹ He likewise adds, “and raise the dead.” But as Grotius and Mill observe, that is not in many manuscripts, and seems not to be a part of the text, if we compare it with Matt. x. 1, or with chap. vi. 13.

Jesus sending the apostles with these powers, says, “He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth Him that sent me.”² He sends them with these instructions, and these powers, “to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” only; expressly prohibiting them to go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans.³

St. Mark relates how fully they executed the whole of this commission, by telling us, that “they went out and preached that men should repent: and they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.”⁴ And St. Luke acquaints us, that “they returned, and that then they told Him (Jesus) all that they had done.”⁵

SECTION II.—*The Seventy appointed on the termination of the first apostolic commission.*

The first commission of the apostles may here be considered to end, as being fully exe-

¹ Vajik Rab. on Lev. xiv. 2. Sanc. ii. § 18.

² Matt. x. 40.

³ Ibid. ver. 5, 6.

⁴ Mark vi. 12, 13.

⁵ Luke ix. 10.

cuted : for we read no more of their being sent, or their going out, or returning, or doing any thing but accompanying Jesus ;¹ which they were now to do, fully to answer one of the ends for which He ordained them, namely, that they might be with Him ;² to the intent that they might be the better acquainted with “ all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after that He through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto His apostles whom He had chosen :”³ and that so they might be the better qualified, by “ accompanying with Jesus all the time that He went in and out among them, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that He was taken up from them, to be witnesses of His resurrection ;” as St. Peter says he must be, that was to take the place in the apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell :⁴ therefore our Saviour bespeaks them thus, in another place, “ You have continued with me in my temptations.”⁵ And that they had then continued with Him for some time, we further learn from John xvi. 32, when Jesus says, “ Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye all

¹ On the probable date of the mission of the Seventy, and for the opinions of the best commentators, see ‘ Arrangement of the New Testament,’ Vol. i. Page 308.

² Mark iii. 14. ³ Acts i. 12. ⁴ Ibid. ver. 21, 22.

⁵ Luke xxii. 28.

shall be scattered every man to his own home, and ye shall leave me alone." And to the intent that they might continue with Jesus, notwithstanding the harvest was great ; soon after their returning to Jesus, after the execution of their commission, " the Lord appoints seventy others (ἐτερείους) also, and sent them two and two, into every city where He Himself would come ;"¹ and then He keeps the twelve constantly with Him. I the rather think this one reason of appointing the seventy, because the instructions and powers given them are exactly the same with those which had been before given to the apostles : for they were to preach that " the kingdom of heaven is come nigh unto you (Jews) :² they were to " heal the sick : " and that they were to " cast out devils," appears from Luke x. 17, where the seventy, on their return, tell Him they had cast them out. And the great agreement that there is in other particulars between these two commissions, may be seen by comparing Luke x. 3—17, Matt. x. 17, and Mark vi. 7—14. This exact agreement between them seems to me to shew, that the commission to the seventy was to supply the place of the former to the twelve, after it was determined. Jesus also speaks to the twelve, just before His being apprehended, of

¹ Luke x.

² Ibid. ver. 10.

this their commission, as being fully executed, and some time since determined ; when He says to them, “ When I sent you without purse and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing ? and they said, Nothing. Then said He unto them, But now he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip : and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.” ¹ And perhaps their being without any commission is the reason why from the time that they returned to Jesus, to give an account of the execution of their commission, we never read the name apostles, made use of by the evangelists in their gospels ; or even the name of the twelve, till Jesus is going up to Jerusalem to suffer ; and when He begins both to foretell His sufferings plainly and to open to them their new commission they were to receive for life, and the power which were to attend it ; ² and that after He had told them, they should have the power of binding and loosing, just as He was going up to Jerusalem to suffer. But in other places they are generally, if not always, mentioned under the common appellation of disciples, as far as I can remember.

¹ Luke xxii. 35, 36.

² Ibid. xvii. 5. xxii. 14.

SECTION III.—*The Apostles, after the end of their first commission, accompany Christ—Their second commission.*

From the time that the apostles returned to Jesus, and told Him all that they had done,¹ we do not read of their doing any thing but accompanying, or continuing, with Jesus, and then being scattered on His being apprehended;² till they being again assembled on the first day of the week after His crucifixion, the very day that Jesus rose from the dead, Jesus at evening standing in the midst of them, says to them, ‘as my Father sent me, even so send I you;’ and when He had said this, “He breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained:”³ Christ had indeed foretold them, that they should have such powers, a little before His death;⁴ but He does but foretell it; as appears from its being said to them in the future tense, “Verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.” And though when He now appears to the apostles on the day of His resurrection, and

¹ Luke ix. 10. ² Matt. xxvi. 31. Mark xiv. 27. John xvi. 32.

³ John xx. 19, 21—24.

⁴ Matt. xviii. 18.

breathes on them, and says, in the present tense, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" yet He does not then actually communicate it, but only assures them, by this visible sign, that He will do it, and do it soon; and prefigures the manner how He will do it, namely, by the sound, as it were, of a mighty rushing wind.¹ That expressions used by our Saviour, in the present tense, sometimes signify a future time only, though but at a small distance, may be seen John xiii. 31, 32. He gives them the like commission Matt. xxviii. 19, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And Mark xvi. 15, "And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel unto every creature."

And as the former commission was but a temporary one, and of short continuance; so this was never to cease, but with their lives; as we shall see more fully hereafter.

But though Jesus gave them their commission for life, in these different ways and terms of expression, yet He saw fit to respite the execution of it, till the descent of the Holy Ghost; for so St. Luke expressly tells us in his gospel, that when Jesus had told the apostles, that "repentance and remission of sins should be

¹ Acts i. 1.

preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem ;” He added, “And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you ; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high :”¹ and so Acts i. 4, 5, Jesus being assembled with the apostles, “commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of me ; for John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” And ver. 8, “And ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you ; and (then) ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.”

After this we find they returned unto Jerusalem, but continued in their upper room² till the Holy Ghost came upon them,³ and then first began to execute the new commission, which they had received from Christ after His resurrection. Jesus was “declared to be the Son of God,” the Lord and Heir of all things, when He was raised from the dead.⁴ But He was not actually invested with this supreme power till His ascension : suitably hereunto Jesus before

¹ Luke xxiv. 50.

² Acts i. 12, 13. ii. 1.

³ Ibid. ii. 23.

⁴ Rom. i. 4.

His ascension declares,¹ that the twelve should be His apostles, should “go and teach all nations, baptizing them,” &c. but they were not actually to do it till the pouring out of the Holy Ghost. The Father had indeed appointed Jesus a kingdom long before Jesus had appointed them that kingdom, a little before His sufferings ;² but He could not invest them with the power that was necessary for their administering it, till He Himself was invested with all power ; nor could He send forth His ministers and ambassadors till He was exalted to be both Lord and Christ ; nor endue them with the promise of the Father till He had first received it : but as soon as He was seated on David’s throne, and had received the promise of the Father, and had shed down that on his apostles which the multitude saw and heard on the day of Pentecost,³ they immediately began to execute the commission for life which they had received. And thus it was after Christ’s ascending up on high, that “He gave gifts unto men : and that He gave some apostles as well as some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers to the church.”⁴ And as they now first began to execute the commission for life, which they had received ; so they never ceased executing it as

¹ Matt. xxviii. 10.² Luke xxii. 29.³ Acts ii. 33.⁴ Eph. iv. 8. 11.

long as they lived. And from this time forth they are constantly distinguished, by the name of apostles, from the other disciples of Christ ; from elders and brethren ; as well as from prophets, evangelists, teachers, and other ministers of the church.

And now they come to be apostles, in the most proper and distinguishing sense of the word : being sent, not only to the Jews as they were before ; but “to all nations,¹ and to every creature ;” ² or, as our Saviour says, Acts i. 8, “to be witnesses to Him in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth.” Whereas the seventy had been sent before, with as full a commission to all intents and purposes, as their first commission was ; which, though temporary, as the first commission of the apostles also was, yet seems to have been of about as long a continuance as the other.

SECTION IV.—*The Apostles to be considered only as acting under the second commission, the principal witnesses to the resurrection of Christ.*

I shall therefore only consider apostles as acting under this commission. And the rather, because Matthias, one of the twelve apostles of the Jews, and Paul and Barnabas, the only apostles

¹ Matt. xxviii. 19.

² Mark xvi. 15.

of the Gentiles, never had the former commission ; and yet were apostles as well as the eleven who had had it.

The more general notion of an apostle in this view, is, that he is “a servant or minister of God, in the kingdom which He has set up under Christ in the world.” The apostles being the persons that were to publish the gospel to all nations, “to bind and to loose, and to declare on what terms man’s sins should be remitted or retained, and to subdue him unto the obedience of faith.” They are in this great dispensation of Providence, honoured with the style of the servants of God, and of Jesus Christ ; who Himself “is faithful unto Him that appointed Him ; yet not as a servant, as Moses and the apostles were, but as a Son over the house of God, made also by God His own.”¹ All the apostles whose writings are come to our hands, and who, we may be sure, would not arrogate to themselves what did not belong to them, take this style upon them ; James,² Peter,³ Jude,⁴ Paul :⁵ and this justice the devil was forced to render them in the Pythoness, acknowledging Paul and Barnabas “to be the servants of the most high God, shewing unto men the way of salvation.”⁶

And inasmuch as the service they were to render unto God and Christ was among those

¹ Heb. iii. 2—7. ² James i. 1. ³ Pet. i. 1. ⁴ Jude 6.

⁵ Rom. i. 1. Phil. i. 1. Tit. i. 1. ⁶ Acts xvi. 17.

to whom they were to preach, they call themselves "their servants" also,¹ agreeable to our Saviour's discourse to them, on Zebedee's children asking the first place in His kingdom, shewing that the highest dignity in His kingdom was the greatest service and usefulness: "Who-soever will be great among you, let him be your servant."

And that they were ministers, we may learn from St. Paul, who says of himself, and other apostles, "let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ;"² and that "Christ had made them able ministers of the New Testament:"³ and comparing himself with the other apostles,⁴ he says, "Are they ministers of Christ? I am more." And speaking of the gospel,⁵ "Where-of he was made a minister." He says the same Col. i. 23. 25. Perhaps this style may have been taken from the Old Testament; for thus Joshua was styled Moses' minister,⁶ and his servant;⁷ and Elisha had a servant or minister:⁸ Solomon had his servants and ministers:⁹ angels are also called God's ministers or servants, executing His commands:¹⁰ "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth for the good of those which shall be heirs of salvation?"¹¹ And accordingly we

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 5.² 1 Cor. iv. 1.³ 2 Cor. iii. 6.⁴ Ibid. xi. 23.⁵ Eph. iii. 6, 7.⁶ Exod. xxiv. 13.⁷ Numb. xi. 28.⁸ 2 Kings vi. 15.⁹ 2 Chron. ix. 4.¹⁰ Psal. ciii. 21.¹¹ Heb. i. 7. ii. 25.

have several accounts of their being sent on great and important errands, in the Old as well as the New Testament. Those also who have answered the great purposes of God in the world, and served His pleasure, have the honour of being styled His servants ; so Job, Jacob, Caleb, David, Nehemiah, and Zerubbabel, have been styled in their time. And thus, in the most eminent manner, Moses is often styled “a servant of the Lord,” and “my servant,” by God Himself, from his being the great instrument of delivering His people out of Egypt, conducting them through the wilderness, and settling the divine government among them. All the priests and Levites were called “the Lord’s ministers,” because they ministered to the Lord in holy things. And, indeed, servants and ministers continue to signify the same thing among ourselves : those that are called the king’s ministers in England, being called his servants in Scotland.

But the apostles have not barely the honour of being the servants or ministers of God in the lower sense in which all good men are so, doing His will in their several stations ; or in which prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, are ministers in the kingdom of Christ :¹ and as “workers of miracles, healers of diseases, diver-

¹ Eph. iv. 11, 12.

sities of tongues, helps and governments," may be said to be ; but in a superlative degree to them all. This appears from their having always the rank given them before the others ; as Acts xv. 23, Eph. iv. 11, and from their presiding constantly in all assemblies of Christians where they were present, proposing, speaking in the names of the assembly, and forming the question, Acts i. 15, and v. 6. and 15 ; but more especially by St. Paul's express assertion, 1 Cor. xii. 28, where he is settling the ranks of the several ministers (or rather of the gifts that qualified them for their different ministries) in the Christian church. For he says, " God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that," &c. And Christians are said by him " to be built on the foundation of apostles and prophets, Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone." ¹ On which account the apostles have the high character of ambassadors, and of acting in Christ's stead. St. Paul calls himself " an ambassador in bonds ;" ² and speaking of himself in the character of an apostle, says, " Now then we, as ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God." ³ On what account this high character is

¹ Eph. ii. 20.

² Ibid. vi. 20.

³ 2 Cor. v. 20.

given him, will be better understood by what follows.

A man may be said to be a servant or minister, who takes a service or ministry upon him, and whose service or ministry is accepted; though he be not called to that service or ministry, or sent upon it. But the apostles were chosen to their ministry or service, and sent on their message before they went. Jesus said to them,¹ “As my Father sent me, so send I you.” As Christ was “the sent of God,” so they were “the sent of Christ;” and Jesus appointed “the kingdom to them, as the Father had appointed the kingdom unto Him.”² The kingdom, every where in the gospels, signifies, the state of things put under Christ, from His ascension to the consummation of all things. As God designed to administer His kingdom by Christ, Christ designed to administer it through the Spirit, by the apostles: and by virtue of the gifts of the Spirit, “they were to sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”³

The first, and one of the most distinguishing parts of their character, service, and ministry, was “to testify and witness:” as Jesus had testified of the Father, so they were to testify of Christ. This I think will appear from seve-

¹ John xx. 21.

² Luke xxii. 29.

³ Ver. 30. Matt. xix. 28.

ral places of Scripture, in which the end of their appointment is declared, or the manner in which they answered it.

Just as our Saviour was going to leave His disciples, He tells them,¹ that “when the Comforter was come, who is the Spirit of Truth, He should testify of Him; and that then “they also should bear witness of Him, because they had been with Him from the beginning.” And after His resurrection He tells them,² “And ye are witnesses of these things.” And adds, that after they should receive power, by the Holy Ghost coming upon them, “they should be witnesses unto Him, both in Jerusalem and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.”³ Thus far the direction to the apostles to witness and testify was general, and extended to any of the facts of Christianity which they had seen or heard. And we may well suppose that the reason why the direction was continued in these general terms was, because our Saviour’s death, resurrection, ascension, and the shedding down of the Holy Ghost, the facts which they were chiefly to testify, had not yet happened: nor did they then understand the great consequence of those facts, or of their testimony about them.

But after the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, they understood that His resurrection was

¹ John xv. 26, 27. ² Luke xxiv. 48. ³ Acts i. 8.

to be the chief matter of their testimony. And, therefore, when they were met together at Jerusalem, waiting for the descent of the Holy Ghost, and were going to choose an apostle in the room of Judas, Peter says, at the conclusion of his speech to the one hundred and twenty, “Wherefore of these men, which have accompanied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection.”¹ As soon as the Holy Ghost was fallen on them, Peter preaches to the Hebrew Jews, and some religious proselytes of all nations; and the conclusion of his discourse is, “this Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.”² And with many other words did Peter testify.”³ And that Peter speaks here in the name of the apostles only, seems plain not barely from his being the mouth of the apostles, but from the people’s addressing themselves to Peter and the rest of the apostles, on what Peter had said to them,⁴ “to know what they should do;” and from Peter’s replying, “that they should receive,” which amounts to saying and we will impart, “the Holy Ghost :”⁵ which none could impart but the apostles. When Peter and John ac-

¹ Acts i. 21, 22.

² Ibid. ii. 32.

³ Ver. 40.

⁴ Ver. 47.

⁵ Acts ii. 38.

count for the miracle they had wrought on the beggar, to the people,¹ they tell them, that they had wrought it by the power of Christ, “whom they (the people) had slain, whom God had raised from the dead; whereof, says he, we are witnesses.” The same thing they witness to the rulers, when they were brought before them, to answer by what power they had wrought that miracle; saying, “Be it known unto you, that by the name of Jesus—whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead (or whom we testify that He raised from the dead) doth this man (the beggar) stand whole before you.”²

On the council's threatening them, if they taught any more in the name of Jesus; they answer, that “they cannot but speak the things, which they have seen and heard;”³ that is, they cannot but testify the resurrection of Christ, whom they had seen and heard, after He was risen from the dead; “He having been seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining unto the kingdom of God.”⁴ After the Holy Ghost's falling on the apostles, and their company, a second time, the remark that St. Luke makes upon it is, that “with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.”⁵ When the

¹ Acts iii. 14.² Ibid. iv. 10.³ Ver. 20.⁴ Ibid. i. 3.⁵ Ibid. iv. 33.

apostles were again questioned by the council for their continuing to teach in Christ's name, they answer, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour—and we are His witnesses of these things." ¹ When Peter and John went down to Samaria, to give the Holy Ghost to the Samaritans, on their receiving the gospel; St. Luke observes, "that when they (Peter and John) had testified (or witnessed) and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem." ² When Peter goes to convert the first-fruits of the proselytes of the gate to the Christian faith, he says, that after the "Jews had slain Christ, and hanged Him on a tree, Him God raised up the third day, and shewed Him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him, after He rose from the dead." ³ "And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify, that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." ⁴ And that He was to be this Judge, they proved by testifying that God had raised Him from the dead; as St. Paul expressly does to the Athenians, telling them, ⁵ "that

¹ Ibid. v. 30—33.

² Ibid. viii. 25.

³ See John xxi. 1—16.

⁴ Acts x. 40, 41, 42.

⁵ Ibid. xvii. 31.

God had appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom He hath ordained ; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead."

St. Luke introduces Paul speaking to the Jews,¹ and acquainting them, that Ananias told him, that " he should be Christ's witness unto all men ;" and that, when our Saviour appeared to him in the temple, he told him, that the " Jews would not receive his testimony concerning Him ; but that he must go and bear it to the Gentiles."² He likewise introduces St. Paul acquainting King Agrippa, that Christ said to him, " Rise, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister, and a witness, both of those things which thou hast seen, and of the things in the which I will appear unto thee."³ In the first discourse of St. Paul of which we have an account, he and Barnabas declare to the Jews, and the proselytes of the gate at Antioch in Pisidia, " that God had raised Jesus from the dead : and declared it, as well from themselves,"⁴ as from those (that is the eleven)⁵ " who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem," and who are said to be

¹ Acts xxii. 15.

² Ver. 18. 21.

³ Ibid. xxvi. 16.

⁴ Acts xxiv. 32.

⁵ That it was the eleven that came up with Christ from Galilee to Jerusalem, see the Abstract.

“ His witnesses unto the people.” ¹ Paul “ testified to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ ;” ² and tells the elders of the church of Ephesus, ³ “ that he had testified both to the Jews and to the Greeks :” and adds, that none of the troubles that he foresaw, moved him from “ testifying the grace of the gospel of Christ.” ⁴ And when our blessed Lord appeared to him in the castle at Jerusalem, He “ bids him be of good cheer ;” for that “ as he had testified of Him in Jerusalem, so he should bear witness also at Rome.” ⁵ Paul likewise declares to King Agrippa, that after “ he was sent to the Gentiles, he continued witnessing both to small and great—that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and unto the Gentiles.” ⁶ And when he was come to Rome, according to our Saviour’s prediction, ⁷ St. Luke acquaints us, that “ he testified the kingdom of God there.” ⁸

We find St. Peter calls himself a “ witness of the sufferings of Christ ;” ⁹ and tells those to whom he wrote, “ that they did not follow cunningly devised fables, when they made known unto them the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ ; but were eye-witnesses of

¹ Acts xxiv. 31. ² Ibid. xviii. 5. ³ Ibid. xx. 17. 21.

⁴ Ver. 24. ⁵ Ibid. xxiii. 11. ⁶ Ibid. xxvi. 22, 33.

⁷ Ibid. xxiii. 11. ⁸ Ibid. xxviii. 23. ⁹ 1 Pet. v. 1.

His majesty. For He received from God the Father, honour and majesty, when there came such a voice from the excellent Glory——and this voice——we heard.”¹ And he does not only exhort, but testify to the Christians to whom he wrote, “that this was the true grace of God in which they stood.”² And St. John, an apostle as well as a writer of one of the gospels, says, “he that saw” (namely the soldier pierce Jesus’ side) “bare record, and his record is true.”³ And that “he testified these things,” namely, those which are contained in his gospel, and “wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true:”⁴ words not used by Mark, or Luke, in their gospels. And in his epistle he says, “That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of Life (for the Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you): that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.”⁵

And St. Paul says,⁶ that if “Christ be not risen, then are we (not only he, but all the rest of the apostles of Christ) found false witnesses, because we have testified of God, that He raised up Christ, whom He raised not up, if so be that

¹ 2 Pet. i. 16—19. ² 1 Pet. v. 12. ³ John xix. 35.

⁴ Ibid. xxi. 24. ⁵ 1 John i. 2, 3. See chap. iv. 14. Rev. i. 9.

⁶ 1 Cor. xv. 15.

the dead rise not." And he calls the gospel which he preached to the Corinthians, (the same in substance that the other apostles did to others) "the testimony of Christ:"¹ and calls it his testimony to the Thessalonians;² "the very testimony of our Lord, which He charged Timothy not to be ashamed of."³ I need do no more than barely acquaint the most unlearned reader, that it is the very same word in the original, which we translate by the two words testify and witness; and which are in our own language of the same import and signification.

Thus we see, that apostles are appointed to testify, or witness, the resurrection of Christ; but we may observe, that though they generally insisted on that, as the fact of the greatest moment, without which the Christian religion could have no foundation, and which, if once admitted, the rest would be readily received; yet they do likewise at times, and as occasion required, attest the other facts of Christianity: Christ's miracles, His transfiguration, His crucifixion, His ascension, and especially His shedding down the Holy Ghost upon them; as a proof of His resurrection, and His exaltation at the right hand of God.

And as thus we see, that apostles testify the resurrection of Christ, and the other great facts

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 1. ² 2 Thess. i. 10. ³ 1 Tim. i. 8.

of Christianity ; so I must add (though I do not know it has been taken notice of) that I cannot find, that any other ministers do it. Prophets are said to exhort : Barnabas was a prophet before he was an apostle ; for he is reckoned among the other prophets in the church of Antioch ; ¹ and he is said to have exhorted at Antioch.² So likewise did Judas and Silas, being prophets, in the very same church afterwards.³ Evangelists are said to preach ; Philip did so to the Samaritans,⁴ and to the eunuch,⁵ and “ in several cities : ” ⁶ and that Philip was an evangelist (at least afterwards) we learn from Acts xxi. 8. Others are said to teach, as Apollos ; ⁷ and to feed the church of God (which is a metaphorical expression for teaching, as I have proved in the First Essay) as the elders of the church of Ephesus.⁸ St. Paul bids Timothy and Titus teach, preach, reprove, rebuke, exhort.” ⁹ But none but apostles are ever, that I can find, ordered or said to testify ; and it is very remarkable, that though Philip is said to preach in those three several places, in the 8th chapter of the Acts, that I have just now quoted ; yet Peter and John are, in that very chapter, said to have testified to those very

¹ Acts xiii. 1.² Ibid. xi. 23.³ Ibid. xv. 22.⁴ Ibid. viii. 5.⁵ Ver. 35.⁶ Ver. 40.⁷ Ibid. xviii. 25.⁸ Ibid. xx. 28.⁹ 1 Tim. iv. 11. 2 Tim. iv. 2. Tit. ii. 15.

Samaritans, to whom St. Luke is so very careful to tell us that Philip only preached.

There were, no doubt, other persons who saw and heard Christ after His resurrection, besides His apostles ; He having been seen “ of Mary Magdalene, of Mary the mother of James, and of other women ;” ¹ “ of Cleophas, and another ;” ² and afterwards “ of five hundred brethren at once.” ³ And they, no doubt of it, might testify as they had occasion. But the apostles “ must needs testify it ;” they being appointed and commissioned by Christ for this purpose, as may appear by most of the places before quoted, particularly Acts i. 8, when all the apostles are “ commanded by Christ to become His witnesses, after they should be endued with power from on high.” This St. Peter expressly asserts of the eleven : ⁴ “ That they were chosen before of God to be His witnesses” (that is by Christ, perhaps on direction from God, after praying all night, to choose out of His disciples, “ them to be His apostles” ⁵) ; and adds, “ that He commanded them to preach and testify, that it is He,” &c. Therefore, as Peter and John told the council, after being forbid to preach in the name of Jesus, “ they

¹ Matt. xxviii. 9, 10. ² Mark xvi. 10. John xx. 14, 15.

² Luke xxiv. 13—33. ³ 1 Cor. xv. 16.

⁴ Acts x. 41, 42. ⁵ Luke vi. 12, 13.

could not but speak the things that they had seen and heard :”¹ and accordingly, when they were questioned how they dared to preach in His name after so strict an injunction to the contrary, their answer is, “ We are His witnesses ;”² (as much as to say, What, not testify His resurrection ? why this is our business, and the very office to which we are appointed) “ and so is the Holy Ghost also, which God has given for this purpose to them that believe.”

The person that was to fill up Judas’s place is expressly said,³ to be “ ordained for this purpose, that he should be a witness together with the rest of the apostles.” And he is chosen by God, as the rest of the apostles are said to be.⁴ For on their prayer to Him (Σὺ, Κύριε, καρδιογνώστα πάντων) to shew which of the two He had chosen, and giving forth their lots ; the lot, in answer to their prayer, fell on Mathias.⁵

SECTION V.—*St. Paul and Barnabas chosen Apostles, for the same purposes as the Eleven.*

St. Paul likewise is chosen by God (as I have observed already) and sent by Christ, as St. Luke tells us he informed the Jews.⁶ “ And I saw Him (Christ) saying unto me, Make haste,

¹ Acts iv. 20.

² Ibid. v. 32.

³ Ibid. i. 22.

⁴ Ibid. x. 41.

⁵ Ver. 26.

⁶ Ibid. xxii. 18. 21.

and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. But depart, for I will send thee far hence to the Gentiles." And St. Luke also acquaints us, that St. Paul afterwards told King Agrippa,¹ that Christ said unto him, "Rise, and stand on thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee to this end, to make thee a minister, and a witness of those things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and the Gentiles, unto whom I now send thee." And the Spirit afterwards ordered the church of Antioch, to separate Barnabas and Saul, "to the work to which He had called them." Perhaps it was also by the Spirit given to Christ without measure, that He (after prayer all night to God) was directed by God to choose the twelve. And so, perhaps, it is said, that "He chose the apostles by the Holy Ghost;"² which I think, with some versions, is the true construction of the verse, *ἄχρι ἣς ἡμέρας ἐντειλάμενος τοῖς ἀποστόλοις, διὰ Πνεύματος ἁγίου, οὗς ἐξελέξατο, ἀνελήφθη.* But, however that was, we are sure that some way or other the apostles were sent by God and Christ, from express assertions of Scripture; and Paul as well as the rest. And therefore what he said of himself belonged to

¹ Acts xxvi. 16.

² Ibid. i. 2.

them all, and in relation to their testimony as well as their doctrine ; “ necessity is laid on me, and woe is me, if I preach not the gospel.” ¹

And as to Barnabas, it is highly probable, that he was ordered by Christ to go and testify. When Christ appeared to Paul in the temple, and bid him to go to the Gentiles, then perhaps He ordered him to take Barnabas with him ; a Jew born among the Gentiles, as he himself was, (the one being born in Cyprus, the other at Tarsus) who had first vouched him to the apostles ; ² very likely as being acquainted with him before. Metaphrastes says, he was his fellow-pupil under Gamaliel ; ³ and then brought him from Tarsus to Antioch, and there laboured with him for a whole year ; ⁴ and was now his companion in carrying alms from Antioch to Jerusalem. ⁵ But, whatever were the reasons why Providence ordered it, that he should be called to be an apostle, yet I suppose Saul was ordered by Christ, at the time when He appeared to him in the temple, to take Barnabas with him ; because ⁶ “ the Holy Ghost says, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work, whereunto I have (already) called them,” not that I now barely call them to, by the prophets. Now

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 16.

² Acts ix. 2. 7.

³ Metaphr. ap. Bar. ad an. 34. num. 262.

⁴ Acts xi. 25, 26.

⁵ Ver. 29, 30.

⁶ Ibid. xiii. 1.

where can we suppose God had called Barnabas to this work, previously to the prophecy of the prophets in the church of Antioch ; unless it was in this appearance to St. Paul in the temple ? So likewise St. Paul and Barnabas say to the Jews ;¹ “ Lo we turn to the Gentiles, for so hath the Lord commanded us.” Where but in this vision ? The text, that St. Paul quotes out of Isaiah, cannot be that command. It is not precise as to the time, when the Gentiles should be preached to ; much less is there any thing so much as hinted, that Saul and Barnabas should do it ; and it is only quoted by them to the Jews, to shew them, that St. Paul and Barnabas might have received such a command, agreeably to a clear prophecy in their own prophets concerning it. Now Barnabas must have been sent some time or other : for that he was an apostle is plain, since he is expressly styled so.² He is ordered to be separated to the same work with St. Paul ;³ he goes along with him to the same work ; he afterwards thinks fit to part with him, and to go on a separate peregrination among the Gentiles ; and to take a minister along with him ;⁴ as Paul and the other apostles did. Paul ranks him with himself as an apostle ;⁵ and he was acknowledged as an apostle by Peter, James,

¹ Acts xiii. 43.

² Ibid. xiv. 14.

³ Ibid. xiii. 1.

⁴ Ibid. xv. 39.

⁵ Cor. ix. 4—7.

and John, as St. Paul tells the Galatians ; ¹ he is often called an apostle by Clemens Alexandrinus ; ² who says, “ sic etiam audit apud plerosque patres.” Jerome says, “ he was ordained apostle of the Gentiles together with Paul.” ³ And since he was an apostle, he must have been sent of God and Christ. For it is “ God that hath set some in the church ; first apostles,” &c. ⁴ And of Christ, St. Paul, (the fellow-apostle of Barnabas) says, “ that He gave some apostles,” &c. This is what has occurred to me, towards proving Barnabas an apostle, and shewing when, and how, he came to be so. Which, I hope, will not be wholly unacceptable ; being a matter which has so little said of it in Scripture ; and where I have had no assistance from any, whom I have read on this subject.

I hope what I have said here, to shew that the apostles were particularly commissioned and sent to testify the resurrection of Christ, may, in some measure, account for their being the only persons, who are said to witness, or testify it. But I am sensible this will account for that character of theirs, but in part. However, I hope under its proper head, before I conclude this Essay, to give my reader full satisfaction concerning it.

¹ Gal. ii. 9.

² Strom. lib. ii.

³ Catal. Vir. Illustr. in Barnab. ⁴ 1 Cor. xii. 28.

Thus it appears, that the apostles were sent by God to testify the resurrection of Christ, and were the only persons, said in Scripture, to be sent by God for that purpose. Now that they might be capable of giving their testimony, it was necessary “that they should have seen and heard our Lord after His resurrection ;” that so they might be eye, and ear-witnesses, of His being raised from the dead. The eleven had seen, and heard Him, after His resurrection, as St. Luke particularly acquaints us.¹ And Peter says, when they were to choose one in Judas’s room, that “out of those men which have companied with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John unto the same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection.”² So that from hence it appears, that Matthias had seen and heard our Lord, after his resurrection, as well as the eleven. St. John in his first epistle, says very expressly to this purpose,³ “That which we [apostles] have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life.—That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you.” And to the same purpose likewise St. Paul says of himself, “Am not I an apostle ?

¹ Acts i. 2—5. ² Ver. 21, 22. ³ Ver. 1. 3.

have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord ?”¹ And,² “ that he delivered unto them (the Corinthians) that which he first received ; how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures ; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures : and that He was seen of Cephas—and last of all, that He was seen of him also, as of one born out of due time. For he was the least of the apostles that was not meet to be called an apostle, because he persecuted the church of God.”

And as to Barnabas, it is most likely that he was one of the seventy : and it is most likely that all the seventy saw our Saviour after His resurrection. It is also most likely that all the seventy were part of the one hundred and twenty. They were of those who had companied with our Saviour from the beginning. And who were so likely as they, to be with the apostles at Jerusalem, after what had befallen their Master so lately there ? none after the apostles, were equally concerned in the great events, of His resurrection, and ascension. But however that may be ; Barnabas is in both the lists that the primitive fathers give us of the seventy.³ So that Barnabas had, in all probability, seen our Saviour after He rose from the dead. He is men-

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 1.

² Ibid. xv. 3–10.

³ Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. ii. p. 410. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. ib. i. c. 12. and ii. c. 1. and Epiph. Heræes. 19. n. 4.

tioned by St. Luke,¹ presently after Christ's ascension, as so eminent in the church as to have been surnamed by the apostles, Barnabas ; that is, the son of consolation ; or, perhaps, of exhortation, as we shall see presently. But however that is, he is said to be "full of the Holy Ghost ;"² a phrase that I hope I have made appear, in the First Essay, is not used of any, but such on whom the Holy Ghost fell, without the laying on of hands. He is reckoned the first of all the prophets.³ That rank, perhaps, denotes Barnabas to be one of the hundred and twenty, who had companied with the eleven, all the time that Christ went in and out among them ; who were, if I mistake not, called the apostles' company.⁴

I say this upon the supposition, that Barnabas is not the same with Barsabas, mentioned Acts i. 23. For if he be the same, he must have been one of the hundred and twenty, who had accompanied with them from John's baptism, ver. 21, and consequently must have seen Christ after His resurrection. And, indeed, it appears to me highly probable, that Barsabas, Acts i. 23, is the same with Barnabas, Acts iv. 36, because their name is the same in some copies : for, 1st, Barsabas, who is called Joseph in some

¹ Acts iv. 36.

² Ibid. xi. 24.

³ Ibid. xiii. 1.

⁴ Ibid. iv. 23. and Luke xxiv. 33.

copies, is called Joses in others ; the same name given to Barnabas, Acts iv. 36. As, on the other hand, Barnabas, Acts iv. 36, commonly called Joses in the generality of copies, is yet called Joseph in some approved ones. So Jerome says, “ Barnabas of Cyprus, called also Joseph the Levite.”¹ Indeed the names Joses and Joseph in the Hebrew are the same.² 2nd, Barsabas, Acts i. 23, is in some copies called Barnabas ; and Barnabas, Acts iv. 36, is in some copies called Barsabas.³ Clemens Alexandrinus and Eusebius were evidently of this opinion ; who, as the rest of the fathers, must be allowed to be of considerable authority in a matter of fact so much nearer their time than ours. And though our countryman Bede calls their authority in question, in this matter, in Acts iv., yet I think he does it without sufficient ground. For St. Luke⁴ does not intimate that Barnabas then first came to the apostles, or that he came after the ascension of Christ ; so much as that he then sold his possessions. Our most Reverend Metropolitan Abp. Wake seems to incline to Bede’s opinion, and offers what is much more considerable than Bede does, to support it. For his Grace observes, in his ‘ Pre-

¹ Catal. Vir. Illustr. in Barnab.

² See Episcop. in Act. i. 23. Horæ Hebr. et Talm. Imp. in Act. Apost.

³ See Mill. in loc.

⁴ Acts iv. 36.

liminary Discourse to the Genuine Epistles of the Ancient Fathers,'¹ that "Barnabas is called a Levite of Cyprus in this place; whereas it would have been more for his honour to have been mentioned as one of the seventy, if he had been one." This, I confess, would have had great weight with me, if I had found one single instance in the Acts, or Epistles, where that character had been given to any. And I apprehend, the reason why it never is given to any, is, that that commission was but temporary: as plainly appears by the commission itself, which was only "to go into those cities, where Christ Himself was to come;"² and by their returning to our Saviour, and giving Him an account how they had executed it. After which, He does not renew it.³ And Barnabas is called a Levite of Cyprus, because his possessions which he sold, and which is the subject of the history, lay in that island;⁴ and perhaps also to intimate to us, that he, who was to be the apostle of the Gentiles, was born on Gentile ground. His Grace too observes, what I think is more considerable to this purpose, "that the name of Barnabas, or son of consolation, seems to be first given him by the apostles,"⁵ on the occasion of his giving so largely to the community of goods.

¹ P. 61. ² Luke x. 17. ³ Ver. 17. ⁴ Acts iv. 36.

⁵ Acts iv. 36.

I would, at least, consider what his Grace says there, as an objection to the opinion of antiquity, and which I espouse; though I cannot say, he brings it with that view. But lest that should have any weight, though it may not have been alleged by his Grace, with a design to corroborate Bede's opinion; I would take liberty to offer this by way of answer: 1st, That *υἱὸς παρακλήσεως* may signify the son of exhortation, rather than of comfort and consolation; so *παράκλησις* is expressly used:¹ and distinguished from *παραμυθία*, comfort or consolation. And this agrees not only with his character in general, as a prophet; but with his particular character in the Acts.² Now if *υἱὸς παρακλήσεως* signifies son of exhortation, and not of consolation, the force of this objection entirely vanishes. But, 2d, if it ought to be translated as our translators have rendered it; yet, considering the Acts was written many years after most of the transactions it contains, the Levite of Cyprus, whose name was Joses, and who, after his selling his estate in that island, was surnamed Barnabas (and universally known to the whole church by that name) might have that name given him by St. Luke,³ by way of anticipation. If upon the whole it shall appear, that Barnabas

¹ Rom. xii. 8. 1 Cor. xiv. 3. ² Acts xi. 23.

³ Ibid. i. 23.

was one of the two put to the lot,¹ it is then plain, that he had seen our Lord after His resurrection, as well as the rest of the apostles; and was consequently qualified, on that account, to testify the resurrection of Christ, as well as they.

SECTION VI.—*Offices, gifts, and powers granted to the apostles.*

But though he and the rest of the apostles were to testify the resurrection of Christ, yet that was not all they were now to do. As Jesus came from God to reveal so much of the will of the Father as He had received a commandment to do; so they were to reveal the mind of Christ, and to “instruct the world in the whole knowledge and mystery of His religion, from Christ the teacher of it.” They had taught under their first commission, “that men should repent, because the kingdom of heaven was at hand;” but, perhaps, then added nothing to what they had literally heard out of the mouth of their great Master. Whilst He was with them, they could have constant recourse to Him for fresh instruction or direction as they wanted it, as He Himself intimates to them.² They were therefore as yet but His echo. But

¹ Acts i. 23.

² John xiv. 25.

now they were to have “a mouth and wisdom of their own,” according to Christ’s promise” (as we shall see more fully presently); and were to teach the whole Christian scheme to mankind. Perhaps in this they bore an analogy to their great Lord and Master, who first had the Spirit of God abiding with Him as a prophet, “could of Himself do nothing; but as He heard, so He judged;”² or, as He says in another place, “as the Father taught Him:”³ for “it was the Father that dwelt in Him [by his Spirit] that did the work.”⁴ Whilst He was upon earth He said, “no man could come unto Him except the Father which sent Him drew him,” namely, by His Spirit. But He says that, “if He be lifted up, then He will draw all men after Him;” namely, by His Spirit, which He should receive from the Father on praying to Him in virtue of the sacrifice He had offered up. But after He was “seated on His throne, and anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows;” in Him were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and having received the promise of the Father, He shed down the Holy Ghost on His disciples. Christ indeed had instructed His apostles in the Christian scheme more fully, after their returning to Him

¹ Luke xxi. 15.² John v. 30.³ Ibid. viii. 28.⁴ Ibid. xiv. 10.

upon having executed their first commission ; teaching them as much as they could well bear before His death. After His resurrection, He was with them forty days, “speaking the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.”¹ But it was after His ascension, as He foretold, that He sent down the Spirit upon them, who was “to lead them into all truth,”² “to teach them all things ;”³ “to bring all things to their remembrance, that Jesus had said unto them ;”⁴ “and to take of the things of the Father, and shew them unto them, and to abide with them.”⁵ By this they “became able ministers of the New Testament ; not of the letter, but of the spirit.”⁶ The Holy Spirit came down on the one hundred and twenty ; among whom was Matthias, as well as the other eleven. St. Paul was instructed in the knowledge of the Gospel that he taught, immediately by Christ, as he assures us :⁷ “But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” And as to Barnabas, he was not only one of the seventy, but also, in all likelihood, one of the one hundred and twenty, on whom the Holy Ghost fell, without the inter-

¹ Acts i. 3. ² John xvi. 13. ³ Ibid. xiv. 26. ⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid. ⁶ 2 Cor. iii. 6. ⁷ Gal. i. 11, 12.

vention of hands. And he was a “teacher, and a prophet, and full of the Holy Ghost,” as I have observed before.

Now this knowledge of the whole scheme of the Christian religion is that which St. Paul calls “the word of wisdom,” committed by the Spirit to the ministers of the highest rank in the church.¹ This I have considered, in the First Essay, as the highest of all the gifts of the Spirit; and have said enough there, if I mistake not, to induce an attentive reader to infer, that it was a gift peculiar to an apostle. My design led me to say so much to this purpose in that Essay. I will add another consideration here, which, I think, will remove any doubt that can remain with the candid; which is this, that the apostles are called “wise men;” as will appear by comparing Luke xi. 49, with Matt. xxiii. 34. For those that are called apostles in the first place, are called “wise men” in the second: and, no doubt, on account of this word of wisdom that was to be committed to them. And, therefore, when Peter speaks of the epistles which Paul had written, he says, “according to the wisdom given unto him.”² This is perhaps what Polycarp alludes to in his epistle, when he says, “that none could attain unto the wisdom of St. Paul, who had written epistles to

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 8. 28, 29.

² 2 Pet. iii. 15.

knowledge” were gifts peculiar to the Apostles. 45

them.”¹ I think this word of wisdom is what he (Paul) calls revelation, as it relates to himself; because it was all communicated to him by “the revelation of Jesus Christ.”² For, says he, “I neither received it of man, nor was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” And he speaks in the same strain to the Ephesians,³ where, speaking of the Gospel which he preached to the Gentiles, he says, how that by “revelation it was made known unto me.” And so likewise to the Romans.⁴ “To Him that has power to establish you according to the gospel, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret from ages, but now is made manifest,” &c. For this reason it is that he places revelation in the first place, and immediately preceding knowledge.⁵

To the apostles likewise was committed “the word of knowledge;” by which I understand, not barely the discovery, or revelation of things concealed before such discovery or revelation; but a discovery, or revelation of some future event that was very great and important, and which related to the state of the whole church; and is from thence called a mystery: a name usually, if not always, given to the revelation of a thing future, that is of the greatest moment to the church.

¹ Epist. § 2, 3.

² Gal. i. 12.

³ Eph. iv. 3.

⁴ Rom. xvi. 25.

⁵ 1 Cor. xiv. 6.

And so the word of knowledge, or the higher gift of prophecy, is to be distinguished from that branch of lower prophecy, which is generally denoted by prophecy in the New Testament; and which signifies the foretelling of some lesser future event, discerning of spirits, and the performing some public acts of worship, by the gifts of the Spirit. I have given my reason for understanding the word of knowledge thus, in the First Essay. All that I have here to do, is, to shew, that this word of knowledge, thus, understood, was committed to the apostles. Now thus we see in fact it was. Our Saviour had foretold them several great events relating to the kingdom of God before His death; these were some of those things which the Spirit "was to bring to their remembrance," and which He who was to lead into all truth, and to teach them all things, was to instruct them in more fully. But His farther office also was "to shew them things to come."¹ And thus, after Christ's ascension, we accordingly see that apostles and prophets are mentioned as the same men;² and to them as prophets are these mysteries in fact revealed. The mystery of calling the devout Gentiles was committed to Peter;³ and the mystery of calling the idola-

¹ John xvi. 13.

² Rom. xvi. 25, 26. Eph. ii. 20.

³ Acts x.

trous Gentiles to the full communion of the Christian church, to Paul.¹ The calling of the idolatrous Gentiles in the manner he called them, without subjecting them to any of the laws of Moses, was the peculiarity of his gospel. And this having been a mystery, till it was revealed to him, is the reason why St. Paul so often calls his gospel a mystery:² whilst the word of wisdom which was committed to him, was the same that was committed to the rest of the apostles; being the gospel, which they, as well as he, preached in common to “Jews and Gentiles, Barbarian, Scythian, bond and free.” I have had occasion to speak a little more fully, of the distinction between the gospel of St. Paul, and the other apostles, in the Preface; to which I beg leave to refer my reader, as also to what I shall have occasion to add farther, before I conclude this head. Besides this mystery, there was also revealed to Paul, the “mystery of the casting off and of recalling the Jews;”³ and “the mystery of iniquity;”⁴ and to St. John, “the mystery of the beast,”⁵ as well as divers other mysteries contained in the book of the Revelations. Thus, while some lesser future events were revealed to prophets

¹ See the Third Essay.

² Rom. xvi. 25. Eph. i. 9. iii. 9. Coloss. i. 25. ii. 27.

³ Rom. xi. 12. ⁴ 2 Thess. ii. 7. ⁵ Rev. x. 7.

of a lower order, as a dearth,¹ and “the binding of St. Paul at Jerusalem” to Agabus ;² and the “foretelling who should be proper persons to be employed in the service of the church,” to others ;³ which branch of lower prophecy I have considered more fully in the First Essay ; the revelation of these greater events, relating to the spreading, corrupting, or restoring the Christian religion, was given to the apostles. For as we see they had this sort of revelation, in divers instances ; so we do not find any instance of it was ever made to any of the other prophets, or ministers of the church. The word of wisdom, and the word of knowledge, seem to have been that high illumination, which was peculiar to an apostle ; how far this excelled the revelation to all other prophets, even to Moses himself, may be seen in the First Essay, where I chiefly referred, to the illumination of apostles.

If it be objected, that such discoveries and revelations as these are of the prophetic, and not of the apostolic kind ; of how high a prophetic kind soever they may be : I agree that it is so. But as these were revelations, that we do not find were ever made to any of the New Testament prophets, that were not at the same

¹ Acts xi. 28.² Ibid. xxi. 11.³ Ibid. xiii. 1. and 1 Tim. i. 14.

time apostles, it comes to the same thing. So that the word of knowledge, may be as truly said, to have been only committed to the apostles, as the word of wisdom.

Under this word of knowledge I likewise think the “understanding the full scope and intent of the law, the prophets, the types and allegories,” is comprehended,¹ of which Peter’s discourses are full (particularly that which immediately followed the first descent of the Holy Ghost);² and Paul’s also to the Jews; of which he has given us a strong instance, in his epistle to the Hebrews. Nor do we find any instance of this sort of knowledge, recorded of other ministers of the church.

It is from these two gifts of the Spirit, namely, the word of wisdom and knowledge, which were peculiar to the apostles, that I apprehend, the “power of binding and loosing;” and the “power of remitting and retaining sins” (foretold to them by Jesus),³ “did flow.” They exercised these powers, by declaring all men bound to faith and repentance, love and charity, temperance and righteousness: by declaring the Jews, after their conversion to Christianity, bound to obey the laws of Moses, and the proselytes of the gate to four of them; and the

¹ See the First Essay.

² Acts xi. 29—37.

³ Matt. xviii. 18. John xx. 23.

idolatrous Gentiles free, or discharged from all of them : not being civil laws to them, as they were, in some sense, to the Jews, and to the proselytes of the gate. They declared all men bound to the laws of the country where they lived, and to domestic and relative duties in the Lord. They declared, that on these terms men's sins were remitted ; and that, if they led a life contrary to these rules, their sins were retained. They declared, that the Jews and proselytes of the gate were released from all the laws of Moses, as the terms of justification and eternal life ; whilst they declared them bound to them, as the laws of their country ; and the terms of enjoying the privileges of Jews, or of proselytes of the gate.

It is of consequence to observe, that the word of wisdom, and the word of knowledge, which the apostles taught, together with the power of binding and loosing, and remitting and retaining sins, came to them “ directly from Christ, or the Spirit of Christ.” Christ and His Spirit alone taught them : they did not learn from others. St. Paul lays great stress upon it, that even the “ other apostles added nothing to him ;” ¹ so careful is he to let us know, that though he was most liable of any of the apostles, to the suspicion of learning his gospel

¹ Gal. ii. 6.

from others ; yet that he learned nothing of it, even from the apostles, of the circumcision themselves ; who were the teachers of all, but of the Gentiles ; of whom he was the teacher himself.¹

But it is certain that, besides the knowledge which the apostles had by immediate illumination, they gained still farther knowledge by deduction and inference from that illumination. The former they deliver, as that which they had received from the Lord, or as what the Spirit saith. But as the latter had a mixture of their own reasoning in it, they do not deliver that, with the authority, they do the other. Under this head I should rank what Paul says he speaks “by permission,” or as one that thinks “he has the Spirit of God,”² or when he says, “they, that is, the apostles, spake from comparing spiritual things with spiritual ;”³ for I cannot suppose with some very learned men,⁴ that the only distinctions Paul makes in the 1 Cor. vi. and 2 Cor. viii. is between what Christ expressly taught in His lifetime, and what the Spirit taught after its descent. For St. Paul surely could not have said, “this say I,

¹ See Irenæus, l. iii. c. 13.

² See 1 Cor. vi. 10. 12. 25. 40. 2 Cor. viii. 8. 10. See this subject discussed in the notes to the “Arrangement of the New Testament,” vol. ii. p. 297.

³ 1 Cor. xi. 13.

⁴ See Mill. Proleg. p. 3. 15.

and not the Lord," if the Spirit of the Lord said so. Nor could he in that case say, "I have no commandment, but I give my advice." Is what he received from the Spirit no commandment? and is it but bare advice? If he had them from the Spirit they were of equal authority with what Christ had said Himself, which was but by the same Spirit: and if it was not so, Jesus could not have said that the Spirit should supply His absence, and in such a manner as to give them more light and instruction, as well as more power and courage, than if Christ had staid with them; as He plainly does: ¹ and as the apostles sometimes speak by inference, so sometimes they speak from a plain quotation.²

SECTION VII.—*Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the teachers of all Christians, by means of the Apostles.*

It likewise very well deserves our notice, that as Christ, or the Spirit, were the only teachers of the apostles; so were "they of all Christians:" being the fountains of all that divine knowledge, which Christians ever had, or shall have, in that or any subsequent age of the world; either in relation to the doctrines or the mysteries of the gospel; other than what was

¹ John xiv. 15, 16.

² 1 Cor. vii. 10.

taught by Jesus Himself. It is of these apostles alone, that He says, “as my Father hath sent me, so send I you;”¹ and He prays for all believers, under these two heads, namely, “His apostles and them that should believe through their word,”² for “the word did but begin to be spoken by the Lord, it was chiefly confirmed by those who heard Him.”³ And he that despised (the precepts, namely, referred to in the verses preceding the 8th, given by the apostle) despised “not man, but God; who had given them His holy Spirit.”⁴ Thus the whole of the Christian religion (besides what our Saviour taught) being nothing but the testimony, teaching, and the predictions of the apostles, confirmed by the Spirit (sometimes called the Spirit of prophecy);⁵ we (as the Ephesians were) are built on the “foundation of the apostles and prophets;”⁶ such New Testament prophets, as were at the same time also apostles. For the Ephesians were Gentiles, and could not be said, to be built on the prophets, of the Old Testament. They were Christians, in all probability, before they knew any thing of the writings of those prophets. But they were built “on those prophets,” to whom St. Paul says,⁷ it was “revealed by the Spirit, that the

¹ John xx. 21. xvii. 18. ² Ibid. xvii. 20. ³ Heb. ii. 3.

⁴ 1 Thess. iii. 8.

⁵ Rev. xix. 10. ⁶ Eph. ii. 20.

⁷ Eph. iii. 5, 6.

Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His (God's) promise in Christ by the gospel; which in other ages had not been made known to the sons of men." For which reason prophets are here put after apostles, though immediately after them, as the New Testament prophets of the highest rank always are; ¹ whereas, in all probability, if Old Testament prophets had been meant, as they were first in time, they would have been put first here too. So likewise St. Paul says to the Romans, that "the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest by the Scriptures of the prophets" (that is, by the writings of such apostolical prophets as himself, particularly such epistolary writings as these to the Romans), "according to the commandment of the everlasting God (was) made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." ² And because the complete discovery of the gospel is nothing but the testimony and preaching of the apostles; as it follows on the one hand, that if their testimony and preaching is true, the gospel is true; so it follows also on the other (as St. Paul does not scruple to affirm) that if "they (the apostles) are found false witnesses, and their preaching is vain; then is our faith vain, and we are yet in our sins." ³

¹ Eph. iv. 11. and 1 Cor. xii. 28, 29. ² Rom. xvi. 25, 26.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 14—18.

Nor were the apostles only the fountains of divine knowledge to the bulk, or the lower ranks, of Christians, but to “the highest orders of them:” none of them all received any immediate revelations concerning the nature, doctrine, or laws of Christ’s kingdom themselves; but deriving all the knowledge they had of them from these first ministers, and ambassadors of the Most High. The twelve apostles, were represented in the revelations, as the twelve foundations, of the wall, of the new Jerusalem.¹ But Timothy, an evangelist, and a pillar in the house of God, was to teach what he “had learnt of an apostle.”² And Apollos, an eminent teacher, was not even instructed by Paul at first, but by Aquila and Priscilla, who had been instructed by Paul. And this, perhaps, is the reason, why Providence ordered it so, that the one hundred and twenty, and others to a great number, should continue at Jerusalem for near a year; and that nothing should drive them thence during that time; namely, that they might, by hearing the apostles, who preached the word incessantly, be so fully instructed in the Christian scheme, as to be able to teach others; and then Providence directs a storm to arise, that should scatter

¹ Rev. xxi. 14.

² 2 Tim. ii. 2. and iii. 14.

them all (but the apostles), in order to their preaching the word elsewhere,¹ though with this distinction, that as the apostles preached the “word of God,”² that is, the word that came to them directly from God, even in a higher sense than the Old Testament prophets, or John Baptist did: so all others only preached the word of the apostles. For it was through “their word that the world was to believe.”³ And as the apostles had the fulness of wisdom, and high degrees of prophetic knowledge, they not only testified in order to make disciples; but wrote “epistles to them, whom they had made so,” in order to the instructing them more fully in the doctrine and mysteries of the Christian religion. They sent likewise “evangelists, with full instructions to finish what was wanting.”⁴ And the things which they had communicated to those evangelists, those evangelists “were to commit to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also;” as St. Paul directly charges Timothy to do.⁵ And thus Clement says, in his epistle to the Corinthians,⁶ “the apostles have preached to us

¹ Acts viii. 14. xi. 19.

² 1 Thess. ii. 13. and in divers other places.

³ John xvii. 20. Concerning this word of the apostles, the following texts may be consulted; Rom. x. 18. 2 Thess. iii. 14. Jude 17. ⁴ 1 Tim. i. 3, 4. Tit. i. 5.

⁵ 2 Tim. ii. 2.

⁶ § 42.

from our Lord Jesus Christ : Jesus Christ from God. Christ therefore was sent by God, the apostles by Christ. So both were orderly sent according to the will of God. For the apostles receiving their commands, having a full confidence through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus, and faith in the word of God, and a fulness of the Holy Spirit, went forth publishing the gospel of the kingdom which should come. And preaching through countries and cities, they appointed the first fruits of their conversation to be bishops and deacons over such as should afterwards believe, having first proved them by the Spirit."

And forasmuch as the fulness of Christian knowledge was to be derived from the apostles, it was necessary, in order to their bearing their testimony to the great facts of Christianity, and for the spreading the knowledge of the whole scheme of its doctrines in the world, that they should be endued with a "superior degree of boldness and utterance:" that so they might never want resolution to testify, to teach, and to foretel these great events, before the greatest personages, and in the greatest danger ; nor a readiness in delivering themselves on all occasions.

Our Saviour acquaints the twelve,¹ that

¹ Matt. x. 17—20.

though they “should be brought before councils, kings, and governors, yet they need not take any thought, or have fear or concern about it; for that the Spirit should give them in that hour what to say:”¹ or, as He elsewhere expresses it,² “That He would give them a mouth and wisdom, which all their adversaries should not be able to resist or gainsay.” He likewise promised the Holy Ghost as their Comforter, in His absence, and who should make them bolder than His presence with them had ever done.³ According to this promise, immediately after the descent of the Holy Ghost, Peter and the eleven (instead of keeping any longer in their upper room, where they used “to meet privately with the doors shut, for fear of the Jews”),⁴ speak openly to the multitude that came together (probably in the temple, at the time of the feast).⁵ After this, Peter and John speak to the people with great boldness and majesty, pertinency and propriety;⁶ and to the council.⁷ Insomuch that the council, “perceiving the boldness of Peter and John, marvelled, and took notice that they had been with Jesus.” And it is observed by St. Luke, that this boldness was an effect of their being filled with the

¹ See also Mark xiii. 11. and Luke xii. 11.

² Luke xxi. 15.

³ John xiv. 16. 18. xv. 26, 27.

⁴ Ibid. xx. 19.

⁵ Acts ii. 6.

⁶ Ver. 12—47.

⁷ Ibid. iv. 8—13.

Holy Ghost ;¹ for he says, “ then Peter being filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them,” &c. And after the remarkable prayer they made to God for boldness, on their first being threatened by the council,² it is also observed by St. Luke, that in answer to that prayer, they were “ all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake the word with boldness.”³ The firmness of Peter and the rest of the apostles is remarkable ;⁴ and we are told,⁵ that “ they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing, that they were counted worthy to suffer for His name.” St. Luke acquaints us, that “ Paul and Barnabas waxed bold at Antioch,⁶ and spake boldly for a long time at Iconium.”⁷ And we find them do so on every occasion, where their discourses are recorded, with great courage and energy, and with a great flow of suitable expressions. And St. Luke informs us, that “ Paul preached the kingdom of God—with all confidence” (or boldness, *μετὰ πάσης παρρησίας*) during the two years he dwelt at Rome.⁸

¹ Acts iv. 8.

² Ver. 24—31.

³ Ver. 36—42.

⁴ Ibid. v. 29—33.

⁵ Ver. 41.

⁶ Ibid. xiii. 46.

⁷ Ibid. xiv. 3.

⁸ Ibid. xxviii. 31.

SECTION VIII.—*Supernatural boldness granted to the Apostles only.*

I do not find that this boldness (παρρησία) is predicated of any but the apostles, besides Apollos, who is said “to begin to speak boldly in the synagogue, whilst he was only instructed in the baptism of John,” ¹ Οὗτός τε ἤρξατο παρρησιάζεσθαι ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ. But though παρρησία generally signifies boldness, yet it sometimes signifies the open or public manner in which any thing is done. And thus our translators have justly rendered ἐν παρρησίᾳ “openly.” “There is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do those things, shew thyself to the world.” So they have likewise well rendered ἐν παρρησίᾳ;³ and thus it ought to have been rendered here, as the two preceding verses plainly intimate; for the sense of those two verses seems to be this, “that on Apollos’ coming to Ephesus, being an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught diligently, though privately, the things of the Lord, being somewhat instructed in the way of the Lord, though he only knew the baptism of John (not having yet had the gifts of the Spirit).” But he now begins to

¹ Acts xviii. 24—27. ² John vii. 4. ³ Coloss. xi. 15.

speak openly or publicly in the synagogue. St. Paul tells Timothy,¹ that “they that use the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves (or acquire) a good degree and great boldness in the faith” (παρρησίαν); but this word here should be rendered “great plainness,” or the skill of speaking plainly. Παρρησία is thus to be understood 2 Cor. iii. 12. A deacon was to be one that held the mystery of faith;² and the sense of this place is, “that he that used the office of a deacon well would acquire great plainness in teaching the mystery.” This boldness therefore seems to me, to be peculiar to the apostles. Their firmness and steadiness under frequent sufferings, is what distinguishes their characters, through St. Luke’s history of their acts. Particularly we find, that they continued at Jerusalem on the first persecution, when all the other disciples fled.³ St. Paul’s unshaken resolution shines through that history above the rest; and is what he himself glories in, in his epistles. And that degree of it which he, as well as the rest of the apostles had, seems to me to have been altogether peculiar to their office.

Such a superior degree of boldness, every one must presently see that the apostles, who were the chief ministers of the Christian church, must

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 13.

² Ver. 9.

³ Acts xiii. 1.

certainly have stood in great need of; who, as St. Paul says of them, "God set forth as it were appointed to death; and made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and men, accounted as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things;"¹ so that it would have been surprising, if they had not had it. And that they had so great a degree of it beyond others, perhaps, might not be owing so much to any immediate influence, as to a natural effect of other gifts, of the Spirit; particularly such as the fuller revelation they had of the Christian religion in its extent and latitude, beyond all others; the understanding the darker places of the Old Testament (which furnished fresh proofs of it, and removed objections against it); and the revelation of future mysteries (by which they were most fully assured of its success and duration); all of which in themselves, as well as the instantaneous manner in which this knowledge was communicated to them, and the power they had of imparting the Holy Ghost to others (of which I shall speak presently), must fully convince them, that this was from God; and that nothing could withstand it. And as courage and boldness were necessary to make them testify the facts, publish the doctrines, and foretell the greater events of Christianity before those in the highest

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 9.—13.

stations, and in the greatest danger ; so was a high degree of patience necessary, to enable them to bear those sufferings in a worthy and becoming manner whenever they befell them. They were not only to venture danger, but to “endure hardships as good soldiers of Jesus Christ;” and accordingly they are represented as furnished with a peculiar degree of patience. Paul says, “they approved themselves as the ministers of God, with much patience in (or under) afflictions, necessities, distresses, stripes, imprisonments, tumults, labours, watching, and fasting :”¹ and reckons patience one of the signs or distinguishing marks of an apostle, as well as “signs and wonders and mighty deeds.”²

Thus far I have described an apostle, from his work and principal business, and from the qualifications he was to have, to enable him to go through it ; and to deliver his testimony, teach the doctrine, and discover the mysteries of the Christian religion. But they had likewise great and peculiar powers conferred on them, to enable them to prove the truth of their testimony, their doctrine, and their fore-knowledge of the greater events of Christianity, to the world. Our Saviour told His apostles just before He was going to leave them, that “when the Comforter

¹ 2 Cor. vi. 4, 5.

² Ibid. xii. 12.

(or the Advocate, as *παράκλητος* signifies) should come unto them, He should testify of Him,¹ and enable them to testify of Him ;”² and that He (in them) should be so powerful an advocate for Jesus as to convince the world, of His righteousness (or innocence) ; of their sin (in putting Him to death) ; and of the condemnation of the devil, or the working of the devil in His judgments against the obstinate wickedness and infidelity of the Jews, and the overcoming the idolatrous and vicious opinions of the Gentiles.

SECTION IX.—*Great and peculiar powers were granted to the Apostles to enable them to govern and controul the Churches :—The first of which was the power of punishing offenders with instant death.*

The great and particular powers, which enabled them to prove the truth of their testimony, doctrine, and predictions, were, 1. The “power of striking bold and daring offenders sick and dead.” Thus Peter strikes Ananias and Sapphira dead, on “their dissembling, and lying to the Holy Ghost.”³ And though we do not read of this power being carried so far by any of the apostles, in any other case ; because no case that we have any account of seems equally to have required it ; yet they had the

¹ John xv. 26.² Ver. 27.³ Acts v. 1—11.

power of inflicting diseases on great offenders, in other instances. Thus Paul strikes Elymas the sorcerer blind, when he “would have perverted the Roman deputy from the right ways of the Lord.”¹ He seems also to have had a power of inflicting bodily distempers on Christians, who had been guilty of great and notorious sins. This he calls his “power, authority, and rod” (ῥάβδον alluding not to Moses’ rod, but to the ῥάβδον δυνάμεως of Christ, which David had spoken of,² and by which he had prophetically described the gifts of the Spirit); “committed to him for edification, and not for destruction;”³ by which he was ready to avenge all disobedience;”⁴ and by which he could bring more terrible judgments on offenders than Moses brought by his rod on the Egyptians. Though it is likely, that sometimes he did not inflict this sentence immediately himself, but delivered them over “to Satan, for the punishment of the flesh; that the Spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord;” as he did in the case of the incestuous Corinthian;⁵ and as he likewise did in the case of “Hymenæus and Alexander, whom he delivered to Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme.”⁶ And it is

¹ Acts xiii. 11.

² Psalm x. 2.

³ 1 Cor. iv. 21. 2 Cor.

x. 8, xiii. 10.

⁴ 2 Cor. x. 6.

⁵ 1 Cor. v. 5.

⁶ 1 Tim. i. 20.

very likely, that it was for a sickness of this sort, inflicted by some of the apostles, that St. James directs those that laboured under it, to send for the elders of the church to pray over them, and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord : since he says, “ the prayer of faith,” or the inwrought prayer of the righteous or inspired man “ should save the sick ;” and if “ they had committed sins,” that is, for which this sickness was inflicted, “ they should be forgiven them,” that is, they should be healed.* Peter’s striking Ananias and Sapphira dead (the first and highest instance of this power) was made an objection to the Christian religion long ago, by one of its greatest enemies. But though the apostolical power was not carried so far in any other instance ; yet this severity seemed very necessary against the first lie that was made to tempt the Holy Ghost, in the beginning of his dispensation or economy ; in order to vindicate the honour of the Spirit, and to justify the chief ministers of it, who by this singular instance of the power of one of them, convinced all by-standers, that they made no pretensions to the Spirit, which the Spirit would not enable them to support. Which thus also at the same time eminently appeared in them the “ Spirit of truth,” by detecting and punishing the lie of

* James v. 14.—17.

those pretended believers, whose hearts “were filled with the Spirit of falsehood.”¹

SECTION X.—*The second, the power of performing extraordinary cures.*

2. And though healing the sick was one of the lowest of the gifts of the Spirit, and committed, no doubt, to many Christians, who had, perhaps, no other ministry in the church; yet the power of working great and “extraordinary cures,” or working the cure of common distempers, “in a great and extraordinary manner,” seems reserved to the apostles. Thus it is observed by St. Luke, as a matter that deserved to be recorded, of Peter and John, that “they cured one that had been a cripple from his mother’s womb, who lay at the beautiful gate of the Temple;”² that “Peter’s shadow cured many;”³ “that he raised Dorcas from the dead;”⁴ that Paul, at Lystra, cured the “cripple that had never walked;”⁵ that he “sent handkerchiefs from his body, to perform cures at a distance;”⁶ and raised Eutychus immediately “after he had fallen from a loft, three stories high.”⁷ And it is, perhaps, in this sense,

¹ Acts v. 3. ² Ibid. ix. 1—12. ³ Ibid. v. 15.

⁴ Ibid. ix. 36—42. ⁵ Ibid. xiv. 8—11.

⁶ Ibid. xix. 12. ⁷ Ibid. xx. 12.

that the cures performed by handkerchiefs from Paul's body are mentioned as an instance of the "special miracles" that God wrought by the hands of Paul,¹ that is, such miracles or cures, as God did not work but by the hands of his apostles, the chief ministers in the kingdom of Christ. And there is no doubt to be made, but that as the apostles delivered over to Satan, so they could deliver from him those they had delivered to him, lest "such should have been swallowed up of overmuch sorrow ;² and lest Satan should have got an advantage over them." They who could dispossess the possessed, could no doubt release those whom they had put into his power, when they saw the flesh destroyed, and the end of their punishment obtained.

SECTION XI.—*The third, the power of conferring miraculous gifts.*

3. But the greatest of these powers, and consequently the greatest proof of the truth of their testimony, teaching, and prophecy, was the "power of conferring the Holy Ghost on believers." And as our Saviour might justly say to the apostles, that "as the Father sent Him, so did He send them," in respect of their testimony, their teaching, their predictions,

¹ Acts xix. 11.

² 2 Cor. xi. 7.

their courage, and the miraculous powers they had ; so also might he say it with the greatest propriety in respect of the power of conferring the Holy Ghost on others ; which He Himself had conferred on them. And by being able to confer the Holy Ghost, as well as by the peculiar illumination which they themselves received, they became “ministers of the Spirit, which giveth life.”¹ The Holy Ghost Himself descended on the one hundred and twenty, first ;² and afterwards, on them, a second time :³ they being, in all probability, the persons described in this last mentioned place by “the apostles company.” After that, He descended on Saul to qualify him the better for a teacher, prophet, and an apostle ; on Cornelius, his family, and friends (the first-fruits of the devout Gentiles) ; and on the first great conversion of the idolatrous Gentiles, at Antioch in Pisidia ; to satisfy the Jews, that Peter had done nothing in one case, nor Paul in the other, but by God’s immediate order and direction. But these do not seem to have been conferred in any other instance, but only by the laying on of the hands of the apostles.⁴

This power, which the apostles had, of conferring these gifts, is what I am apt to think our Saviour referred to, when He ordered them, just

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 6.

² Acts ii. 4.

³ Ibid. iv. 31.

⁴ See the First Essay.

before His ascension, “to tarry in the city of Jerusalem, until they were endued with power, *δυνάμει*, from on high.”¹ I cannot but observe, by the bye, that this is the word used Psalm cx. 2: we translate it in the new version, “the rod of His strength;” but it was better rendered in the old, “the rod of His power,” *ῥάβδον δυνάμεως*; and ver. 3, “the people shall be willing in the day of thy power.” And I apprehend that one reason why our Saviour uses this word here is, that it is the word in which David had prophetically foretold the gifts of the Holy Ghost in that Psalm.² In the first verse he speaks of Christ’s exaltation “until His enemies become His footstool;” in the second, that on His exaltation to the right hand of God, God should send the “rod of His (Christ’s) power (*ῥάβδον δυνάμεως*) out of Zion;” that “rod of power” by which He should “rule in the midst of His enemies,” as we see Christ did by the gifts of the Holy Ghost the very day they were sent down on the apostles and first disciples, assembled by Christ’s direction at Jerusalem, waiting for them. For by them Christ’s apostles subdued many of those who had crucified Him, being now convinced by

¹ Luke xxiv. 49.

² Another reason why our Saviour uses this word may be seen in the First Essay.

them that He was exalted to the right hand of God, and was become Lord and Christ.¹ By this, of enemies they became a willing and a numerous people in the day of His power. For “they gladly received His word,”² and sold their possessions, giving to their fellow subjects as every man had need.³ And St. Luke farther acquaints us,⁴ that our Saviour told them, that “they should receive power, after that the Holy Ghost was come upon them; and that they should be witnesses unto Him,” &c.; so that the power (*δύναμις*) here seems to be somewhat distinct from the gifts themselves. What should that be, but the power of conferring them? suitably whereunto St. Luke acquaints us, that Simon Magus, on seeing that, “through laying on of the apostles’ hands, the Holy Ghost was given, offered them money, saying, Give me also this power or authority (*τὴν ἐξουσίαν ταύτην*), that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.”⁵ Agreeably hereunto St. Paul also speaks of what he did, in the “power of the Spirit of God, from Jerusalem to Illyricum, among the Gentiles (*ἐν δυνάμει Πνεύματος Θεοῦ*).”⁶ So that the power the apostles were to wait for, before they were to begin to witness, seems to me

¹ Acts xi. 34—37. ² Ibid. 41, 46, 47. ³ Ver. 44, 45.

⁴ Ibid. i. 8.

⁵ Ibid. viii. 19.

⁶ Rom. xv. 19.

to have been the power of conferring these gifts.

And as I apprehend the power of conferring the Holy Ghost, was the power the apostles were to wait for, before they began to testify ; so I apprehend it was the peculiar and distinguishing power, that belonged to them, as witnesses, as well as teachers, and prophets of the first rank. The reasons that make this appear to have been the most peculiar and distinguishing power belonging to their office, may be seen in the First Essay, and in the progress of this. And that in fact it was so, we farther see in the case of Philip’s preaching to the Samaritans. For though on his preaching, and their believing, he baptised them ; yet he could not confer the Holy Ghost. “ For as yet,” as St. Luke observes, “ He was fallen upon none of them.”¹ But when the apostles at Jerusalem, on hearing of Philip’s success, had sent down Peter and John, and they had “ prayed for them, and laid their hands on them, the Samaritans received the Holy Ghost.”² And when Simon Magus saw, that through the laying on of the hands of the apostles, the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.”³ So that

¹ Acts viii. 16.

² Ver. 15. 17.

³ Ver. 18, 19.

Simon Magus thought the apostles only had the power of conferring the Holy Ghost ; or else he would not, probably, have offered the money to them, but to Philip ; by whom he believed, and with whom he had been acquainted for some time. And that Philip could not confer the Holy Ghost, but the apostles only, is the observation of Chrysostom in loc. And Epiphanius says, ὁ Φίλιππος, διάκονος ὢν, οὐκ εἶχεν ἐξουσίαν τῆς χειροθεσίας τοῦ δι' αὐτῆς διδόναι Πνεῦμα ἅγιον.¹

St. Paul “confers the gifts of the Holy Ghost on Timothy,” as St. Paul himself asserts ;² and it is plain, he imparted them to the Thessalonians. For being just about to speak of his first entrance and reception among them,³ he says,⁴ “For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost.” And so likewise tells the Corinthians, that his preaching when he first “came to them, was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power ; that their faith should not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God.”⁵ And he sufficiently intimates, that he had imparted the Spirit to the Galatians, at his first coming among them, and their “receiving him as an an-

¹ Hæres. 21. Simon. ² 2 Tim. 1. 6. ³ 1 Thess. i. 6. ii. 1.

⁴ Ibid. i. 5.

⁵ 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5.

gel of God, even as Christ Jesus,"¹ when He asks them,² "Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, doth he it by the works of the law, or the hearing of faith?" St. Luke informs us, that when Paul came to Ephesus, finding twelve of John's disciples, he imparted the Holy Ghost to them. And the manner in which St. Luke introduces the relation shews, that Paul imparted it to all believers of course, where he came.³ And so he speaks of this matter himself to the Romans; for he says, that he writes to them more boldly—because "of the grace given him of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. I have therefore (says he) whereof I may glory, through Jesus Christ, in those things which pertain unto God: for I will not dare to speak of any of those things, which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient in word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ."⁴

¹ Gal. iv. 14.² Ibid. iii. 3—5.³ Acts xix. 8. See the First Essay.⁴ Rom. xv. 16—20.

And as wherever Paul had been, he seems to have conferred the gifts of the Holy Ghost; so he appears desirous to see some churches which he had not yet seen, that he might confer them; particularly that at “ Rome, that he might impart unto them some spiritual gift, to the end they might be established. That is, (says he) that I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me.”¹

These powers, and especially the last, seem to me to be “ those signs of an apostle,” to which St. Paul appeals, in his second epistle to the Corinthians.² A church that “ abounded in all the gifts of the Holy Ghost,”³ so as “ to be inferior to no church, or to come behind no church in them;”⁴ and by this power he proves, that he came behind none of the apostles, since that “ truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among them—in all signs and wonders, and mighty deeds.”⁵ And this is what he points at, as the seal of his apostleship among them, when he says,⁶ “ if I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you; for the seal of my apostleship are ye in the Lord;” that is, in my conferring, and your re-

¹ Rom. i. 11, 12.

² 2 Cor. xii. 12.

³ Ver. 13.

⁴ 1 Cor. i. 7.

⁵ 2 Cor. xii. 12.

⁶ 1 Cor. ix. 2.

ceiving the gifts of the Holy Ghost, you have received the mark or proof of my apostleship to you ; the most peculiar and distinguishing, and the least liable to any suspicion of being counterfeited, of any other whatsoever. The Corinthians, indeed, abounded in spiritual gifts, which he had imparted, and that, therefore, must be the seal of his apostleship. For they were so far from excelling other churches in holiness and virtue, that they seem, by both St. Paul's epistles to them, to have had more faults, disorders, and vices among them, than any of the rest ; such as had kept him a great while from coming among them, lest he should have been forced to have used too great sharpness and severity, instead of the gentleness and meekness that he desired to express toward them. I must refer my reader to the First Essay, where he will find several things said, which may serve to prove what I am asserting here ; though I alleged them there, to prove that all believers, where the apostles came, had these gifts imparted to them. But most of those texts will shew, that it was some of the apostles who imparted them. And though we do not read of any of the apostles conferring the gifts of the Holy Ghost besides Peter, John, and Paul ; yet there is no room to doubt, but all the rest exercised that power as well as they.

SECTION XII.—*Objections answered.—The time when St. Paul received the Holy Ghost considered.*

From these considerations, I think, it appears very plainly, that the conferring the gifts of the Holy Ghost, by the laying on of hands, was peculiar to the apostles, and the most distinguishing badge of their office. But there seem to be two objections against it, which deserve our attention. The first is, that “Saul has been generally thought to have been filled with the Holy Ghost, by the laying on of the hands of Ananias:” because Ananias says, that Christ sent him, that “Saul might receive his sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.”¹ Yet this, in my opinion, is very far from making it clear, that Ananias conferred the Holy Ghost on Saul, if we consider the whole matter. For the orders which Ananias receives in a vision, and which he is told that Saul had received in a vision also, were, that he (Ananias) was to come to him (Saul) “to put his hands on him, that he might receive his sight.”² If Ananias was to come to him, that by putting his hands on him, he might receive the Holy Ghost, it is surprising, that so superior a gift to that of the imparting sight, should not have

¹ Acts ix. 17.² Ibid. 11, 12.

been mentioned. And when St. Luke introduces St. Paul himself as giving an account of this transaction,¹ he speaks only of receiving his sight from Ananias: “and one Ananias, (says he,) came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight;” but says nothing of his receiving the Holy Ghost from him.

And that he did not receive the Holy Ghost, at least by that laying on of the hands of Ananias that restored Saul’s sight, is plain from hence; that after Saul had received his sight, by the laying on of Ananias’ hands, “he arose, and was baptised.”² And in the account that St. Paul himself is introduced as giving of this transaction,³ he says, that after Ananias had said to him, “Brother Saul, receive thy sight, and that he looked up upon him,” and that Ananias had delivered him a farther message, “he was baptised.” All this shews, that he was not baptised until after he had received his sight, by Ananias’ laying on his hands. Now the Holy Ghost fell always after baptism, unless in the case of Cornelius and his family, for a reason that did not hold in the case of Saul; see the First Essay. From hence then we may conclude, that Ananias did not

¹ Acts xxii. 12, 13.² Ver. 18.³ Ver. 13—17.

confer the Holy Ghost on Saul, by that laying on of his hands, by which he gave Saul his sight. And as we have no account that he laid his hands on him a second time, it is plain, that the text does not assert that Ananias gave Saul the Holy Ghost.

Perhaps, therefore, all that Ananias did, was to put his hands on him, in order to give him sight; that so, when he received it, and had been baptised, he might see the Holy Ghost descend on him in a cloven tongue, as of fire; as it did on the other apostles and their company, at the beginning: especially since Paul asserts, that “he was not one whit behind the very chiefest apostles;”¹ and that in other cases, what happened to them in the course of things, happened to him also, though “out of course;” as to one “born out of due time.” For as they saw the Lord, so did he; and it is very probable, therefore, that as the Holy Ghost descended on them, so it did on him also. And I think this is plainly implied, in its being said, that “he was to be filled with the Holy Ghost;”² and in its being afterwards said, that he “was full of the Holy Ghost.”³

Nay, as I apprehend, he refers “to the immediate descent of the Holy Ghost on himself,”

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 5.

² Acts ix, 17.

³ Ibid. xiii. 9.

Tit. iii. 5, 6, where, speaking of the Holy Ghost, he says, “which He shed on us abundantly.” Now that phrase, as I have observed in the First Essay, denotes the immediate descent of the Holy Ghost; or His falling down without the intervention of hands. The only question here is, whether St. Paul speaks of himself in this place; which I apprehend he does: for taking this to be the connexion and the sense of it, he is directing Titus what he should teach the Cretans; ¹ and proceeds² thus: “Put them in mind—to speak evil of no man; to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing meekness to all men.” And to shew how reasonable it was for him to direct Titus to teach this doctrine of gentleness and meekness to all men, even to the worst; where the best may, perhaps, think themselves the most justified in shewing a fierce and bitter zeal; he adds,³ “for we ourselves,” that is, I myself, “was sometimes foolish,” not knowing the truth, but ignorant of the gospel of Christ, even after I had opportunity of informing myself of it; “disobedient” to it, after I knew it, “deceived” in thinking still that I was to be justified by the works of righteousness, enjoined by the law of Moses, “serving divers lusts and pleasures,” particularly those

¹ Tit. ii.² Ibid. iii. 1, 2.³ Ver. 3.

that follow, “ living in malice and envy” against all the disciples, “ hateful” to them, and because “ hating them ;” being, as he says,¹ “ a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious ;” breathing out nothing but “ threatenings against them ; making havock of them ; and entering into every house haled men and women out of them, and committed them to prison ; being exceedingly mad against them ; persecuting them to strange cities, and to the death ; and even compelling them to blaspheme ;”² but after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared (to me), not by the works of righteousness (which I did as a Pharisee), but according to His mercy He saved us (me) by the washing of regeneration,”—regeneration being signified by the washing of baptism, alluding particularly to Ananias’ words, “ Arise, and wash away thy sins,”³ “ and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which (as soon as I was baptized) He shed on me abundantly”—a phrase that I think always denotes the immediate communication of the Holy Ghost—“ and filled me with his gifts :” the proof that he had renewed me, or made a new creature of me. So that the sense upon the whole, is as Seneca says in another case ;⁴ “ Faciet nos modera-

¹ 1 Tim. i. 13. ² Acts viii. 3. ix. 1, 2. xxii. 4. xxvi. 11.

³ Ibid. xxii. 16. ⁴ De Ira, ii. 28.

tiores respectus nostri, si consuluerimus nos :” and not unlike what Pliny says, on a like occasion with Seneca, “*Cogita illum puerum esse, et te fuisse.*” The whole seems to be very near what St. Paul undoubtedly says of himself: ‘ “ And I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry ; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious. But I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying—that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” If this be not the sense of this place, I must own that the connexion of St. Paul’s thoughts here does not appear to me ; considering that he is writing to Titus, what he should teach the Cretans.

I do not apprehend, that it is any objection to this interpretation, that St. Paul says, “ He had always lived in all good conscience ; ” ² for the meaning there is, that he had acted according to his full persuasion, since his seeing the glory of Christ in the road to Damascus ; as he had not acted against the full and clear convictions of his conscience, before ; even while he perse-

¹ 1 Tim. i. 12, 13, 14, 15.

² Acts xxiii. 1.

cuted all of this way (though he had been wanting in a due attention to the evidence of the Christian religion), referring to the speech he had made the day before,¹ in which he had² shewed, that, instead of being a profligate Egyptian, as the chief captain had imagined,³ or of being guilty of teaching the Jews, which were among the Gentiles, against the people and the law, and the temple, and polluted it, of which the Jews of Asia accused him;⁴ he had been not only “as touching the law blameless,” but highly, nay madly zealous: and that it was on nothing but the highest evidence, that he at last became a Christian. Nor is this interpretation contrary to the character he gives of himself, Phil. iii. 6. 2 Tim. i. 3. For not to go about to explain those texts now, and, to shew in particular, that they do not contradict this interpretation, I will observe only these two things; first, that all the lusts he here speaks of, were such as consisted with being thought blameless, according to the law: or, in other words, were such as might be committed by those that worshipped one God, and outwardly appeared to live conscientiously, or conformably to the law.⁵ And secondly, that notwithstanding the character he gives of him-

¹ Acts xxii.

² Ver. 3, 4.

³ Ibid. xxi. 38.

⁴ Ver. 27, 28.

⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 9.

self¹ here, he says, in a place I just now quoted,² that he was “a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious ;” and elsewhere, that he was, on this account, not only “less than the least of all the apostles, not worthy to be called one, and less than the least of all saints ; but the chiefest of sinners.”³

And I the rather apprehend the Holy Ghost fell down immediately on St. Paul, as He did on the other apostles, for these reasons ; 1st, that He might thereby point him out as an apostle, and set him on a level with the other apostles in this respect ; since he says, he was “not one whit behind the very chiefest of them ;” and in all respects seems to have the preference to them. 2d, We find no trace of any objection to St. Paul, on the account of the Holy Ghost’s being imparted to him by another, and particularly by a disciple, as we find there was an account of his being thought to have received his doctrine and apostleship from the Jewish apostles ; of his not being uniform in his teaching the gospel of the Gentiles ; of his rude speech, and mean and contemptible appearance : and there is little doubt to be made, but we should have met with this objection to him, as well as the others, if there had been any

¹ Phil. iii. 6. ² 2 Tim. i. 3. ³ 1 Tim. i. 15.

ground for such an objection : since, if he had received the Holy Ghost from another, and especially from Ananias a disciple, it would have set him below the other apostles, on whom the Holy Ghost fell without the intervention of hands. 3d, Because, if the Holy Ghost did not descend on him without the intervention of hands, the Holy Ghost must have been imparted to him by the laying on of the hands of Ananias, who was but a disciple.¹ And we are so far from having any instance of a disciple's conferring the Holy Ghost, that we find Philip, who was himself " full of the Holy Ghost," a deacon,² and an evangelist ;³ and, in all probability, an elder (or one of the hundred and twenty on whom the Holy Ghost first fell) could not impart it.⁴

And as St. Paul seems to me to assert expressly in this text, that the Holy Ghost fell down on him in the same manner as it did on the rest of the apostles ; so he seems to imply it in another, where he speaks of himself, as having received the first fruits of the Spirit, as well as other apostles ;⁵ " for we ourselves (says he), who have received the first fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves," &c. Now first-fruits signifies a small, but the choicest

¹ Acts ix. 10. ² Ibid. vi. ³ Ibid. xxi. 8.

⁴ Ibid. viii. 12—20. ⁵ Rom. viii. 23.

portion of that kind of which they were the first-fruits.' So that the meaning of the first-fruits of the Spirit, are the choicest gifts of the Spirit; which, as we have observed before, were given immediately by the falling down of the Holy Ghost, without the intervention of hands; and particularly on the apostles, who had the highest and the greatest variety of spiritual gifts. And that "we" signifies "we apostles," in opposition to "the rest of the creatures," or "new creation, or the rest of Christians,"² will appear to those who consider the context.³ And if so, St. Paul here implies, that he, as well as the rest of the apostles, received the gifts of the Holy Ghost, by the Holy Ghost's falling down on him immediately, as on them, without the intervention of hands.

SECTION XIII.—*On Timothy receiving the Holy Spirit, by the hands of the Presbytery.*

There is another objection to this assertion, and which may, at the same time, be likewise considered as an exception against one of the instances I have brought, to shew that the Holy Ghost was conferred by the laying on of the

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 20. 23. Rom. xvi. 5. 1 Cor. i. 15, 16. James i. 18.

² So that expression more plainly signifies, James i. 18.

³ See Limborch in loc.

hands of the apostles, which is the case of Timothy, who has been generally thought to have received the gifts of the Holy Ghost, “by the laying on of hands of the presbytery;”¹ whereas I have asserted he received them from Paul. But I do not see how Timothy’s receiving those gifts “by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery,” is irreconcilable with St. Paul’s expressly saying it was “by the laying on of his hands;” for it is supposed by all, that this was the same gift mentioned by St. Paul, 2 Tim. i. 6. And that it is the same gift, appears not only from the very same word being used in both places, *χάρισμα*; but from that word’s always signifying some gift; and signifying always, except once, a gift of God: and of the sixteen times it is used in the New Testament, signifying eleven times the gift of the Holy Ghost,² but never once an office. And how is it reconcilable to good sense, or St. Paul’s humility, for him to assume or arrogate that, to the laying on of his hands only; which was due to the laying on of his hands but in conjunction with the laying on of the hands of so many others? Nor do I see, how this can be reconciled to the whole current of Scripture, which ascribes this power always to the apostles, and never gives us a single instance of its being

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 14.

² See the First Essay.

given by an elder, though the next in rank to the apostles. Nay, if Philip was an elder, as I have just now shewn we have great reason to believe, it appears that an elder could not confer the Holy Ghost by the laying on of his hands, from the history of the conversion of the Samaritans.¹ I observe, therefore, that the text runs thus ; “ neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy” (διὰ προφητείας) or “ according to the prophecy concerning thee,” “ with” (μετὰ) not “ by” (διὰ) “ the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.” Laying on of hands was a sign that accompanied blessing and prayer. See the Third Essay. I shall not repeat all that I say there to prove it. I shall only mention this, that “ when they laid their hands on Barnabas and Saul after they had fasted and prayed,”² it is said to be nothing more, than “ a recommending them to the grace of God.”³ And so the church of Antioch recommended Paul a second time to the grace of God ;⁴ and, as is highly probable,⁵ by fasting and prayer, and the laying on of hands. I take the sense, therefore, of this place to be, “ neglect not the gift of an evangelist that was given thee, by the putting

¹ Acts viii. 12—20.

² Ibid. xiii. 3.

³ Ibid. xiv. 26.

⁴ Ibid. xv. 40.

⁵ From the same expression being used as in Acts xiv. 26.

on of my hands, according to the prophecy of a prophet, or prophets, concerning thee, to whom it was revealed by the Spirit, that thou wouldst be fit for the work which thou wast to undertake ; and that thou wouldest not neglect, but stir up the gift that should be given thee, by the laying on of my hands : otherwise I should not have ventured to have prayed for the gifts of an evangelist for thee, or laid my hands on thee in the hope of thy obtaining it, considering thy youth : but the prophecies made of thee were a sufficient warrant for me, to pray to God, and lay my hands on thee for this purpose. And which when I had done, the presbytery, or all the elders at Derbe or Lystra recommended thee to the grace of God, praying for a blessing on thy gifts and labours ; laying their hands on thee, when they prayed for that blessing ; according to the custom usual in such cases."

Thus, I hope, I have proved my assertion, " that the apostles, and none but apostles, had the power of conferring the gifts of the Holy Ghost ; and that this was the most distinguishing badge of their office ;" and have answered the exceptions that may be made against it.

SECTION XIV.—*St. Paul possessed all the powers of the chiefest Apostles.*

I now proceed to shew, that as St. Paul had these extraordinary powers, in common with the rest of the apostles; so he seems to have had “one, which was peculiar to himself;” at least, that he had one, which we have no account of in any of the other apostles: which is, the power he sometimes had of seeing what was done in the Gentile churches at a distance; and of being present with them when absent; as Elisha, by his prophetic spirit, went with Gehazi, and saw his receiving a present from Naaman the Syrian.¹ We have one instance of this in St. Paul, in the epistle to the Colossians,² where he tells them, that though he was “absent in the flesh, yet he was present in Spirit, joying, and beholding their order, and the steadfastness of their faith in Christ.” And we have another instance in his epistle to the Corinthians,³ where he tells them, that “he, as absent in body, but present in Spirit, had judged already, as though he was present, concerning him that had done that deed. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (says he), when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of the Lord Jesus to deliver such an

¹ 2 Kings v. 26.² Col. ii. 5.³ 1 Cor. v. 3, 4.

one to Satan," &c. Perhaps this gift might be imparted to him, considering the vast extent of his province, and the great number of churches he had under his care, for the greater benefit of those churches, and to relieve him from some of that anxiety he had for their welfare.

SECTION XV.—*Meaning of Christianity.*

Now as Christianity is nothing (besides the doctrine our Saviour Himself taught) but the testimony and doctrine (and, if you will, the predictions) of the apostles; so these several powers of inflicting diseases on obstinate offenders, and of healing distempers, in the manner they could heal; and above all, the power of imparting the Holy Ghost, by the laying on of their hands (and the power of seeing things at a distance in St. Paul), were "the proofs of the truth of their testimony, and of their doctrine" (and their predictions); so that those who saw them exert those powers could no longer doubt of the truth of what they testified and taught (or foretold), as I have shewn more fully elsewhere.¹ This was what made their testimony, and their doctrine (and their predictions), so generally received; and without which all would

¹ See the First Essay.

have been questioned. It was for this reason that our Saviour did not so much as expect that they should go and testify, and teach, much less that they should be received, until they had these powers imparted to them. For our Saviour orders them to “tarry at Jerusalem, until they were endued with power from on high;” and tells them, “that they should receive power, after that the Holy Ghost should be come upon them, and that (then) they should be witnesses.” Accordingly they continue at Jerusalem together in an upper room, until the Holy Ghost comes down upon them, teaches them the doctrine they were to teach, and gives them the courage necessary to their testifying and teaching, and the powers necessary to prove the truth of their testimony and of their doctrine : and then they go and testify, and teach what they had seen and heard, and what they had been taught, with the greatest resolution and success ; and without ever fainting, or growing weary in their work. And because the apostles were to have such great and peculiar powers to prove the truth of their testimony, for that reason they alone were ordered, or commissioned, to witness or testify. And because they were such bold, such unwearied, such convincing witnesses of the truth of the great facts of Christianity, as well as because they had the only commission to testify

¹ Luke xxiv. 49.

them, they are therefore spoken of every where in the New Testament, as the only witnesses and testifiers of these facts to the world.

SECTION XVI.—*Impossibility of assuming the apostolical character falsely.*

Those who assumed the apostolical character, giving themselves out for apostles, could not expect to be received without endeavouring to imitate and counterfeit some of their powers, as well as pretending to new revelations. Our Saviour foretold this before His death ; saying, that “ false prophets as well as false Christs should arise, and should shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible they should deceive the very elect.”¹ St. Paul speaks of false apostles² in his time, as well as St. John in the latter end of his ;³ and St. Paul calls them “ deceitful workers, transforming themselves (by their deceitful works as well as their false pretensions) into the” appearance of the “ apostles of Christ.” It is highly probable these are those whom St. Paul describes,⁴ and whom he calls “ seducers,”⁵ and “ as having a form” or false appearance “ of godliness, whilst they denied the power thereof ;”⁶ and who, as I think, he inti-

¹ Matt. xxiv. 24.

² 2 Cor. xi. 24.

³ Rev. ii. 2.

⁴ 2 Tim. iii. 2—14.

⁵ Ver. 3.

⁶ Ver. 5.

mates withstood him, as Jannes and Jambres the two Egyptian magicians did Moses ; namely, “after the working of Satan, with lying wonders, and all deceitfulness ;” as St. Paul on another occasion writes to the Thessalonians ;¹ even such, as “they should believe though a lie and a mere appearance ; who love not the truth.”² Such deceitful workers were Simon Magus, who bewitched the people, giving out or pretending himself some great one ; and who as he seems to have been the first of these deceitful workers, those in aftertimes sprung from. Such was Elymas the sorcerer. Such afterwards, if the accounts of the fathers are to be depended on, were Menander, that disciple of Simon Magus, the Basilidians, the Carpocratians, Marcus, &c. ; who seem, by the accounts that are given us of them, rather to have wrought seeming than real miracles ; since one of the marks or signs which some of the fathers give us, to distinguish the real from their seeming miracles, was whether the effect produced, or pretended to be produced, was permanent, or no.³ Thus, as the apostles had their real and true, the false apostles had their false and pretended miracles (τερατα ψεύδους), and in great abundance. But I can find but little pretensions in these false apostles or heretics, to counterfeit the gifts of illumi-

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 9. ² Ver. 10, 11. ³ Iren. l. ii. c. 57. xv. c. 6.

nation. They seem to have struck them all as they did Simon Magus at the first.¹ I remember no pretence to the faintest resemblance of these gifts of illumination but in one single instance. Irenæus tells us, that Marcus, after he had made women partakers of the eucharist (which he says he consecrated by some magical verses, and changed the colour of the wine by it), made them so mad, that they thought themselves turned into prophetesses;² and that Paredrus seemed to prophesy; and would impart his enthusiastic fury to women, by some verses pronounced among them.³

SECTION XVII.—*Great importance of the apostolic office.*

I cannot but desire my reader to stop here a little with me, and review with himself what I have said of the apostles; and from thence consider the great importance of their office to mankind, and how well that consideration suits with the last prayer our Saviour made, just before He was apprehended, and but a few hours before He was to die; and, consequently, where we may be sure to find what was most upon His heart. The greatest part of this prayer by far

¹ Iren. i. 19.

² Ibid. ii. c. 2.

³ Ibid. l. i. c. 12.

is for the apostles alone, namely, from the 6th verse to the 20th. And for them, “with the rest that should believe on Him through their word,” from the 20th verse to the 26th.—That He begins to pray for the apostles in the 6th verse, appears from the phrase He uses, “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them me.” This phrase, I think, denotes the apostles, wherever it occurs in this chapter, and particularly ver. 9. 11, and most evidently in the 12th, and chap. xviii. 9. But besides the great share our Saviour gives them in this His last prayer, let us consider some passages of it. He says, ver. 4, “I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” How does the following part of our Saviour’s prayer explain this, that He had finished the work which God gave Him to do? Why, ver. 6, 7, 8, he adds, “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; and they have kept thy word. They have known, that all things whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest unto me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.” The 12th

verse is still more express to our purpose ; for there our Saviour adds, “ while I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name : those that thou gavest me, I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition.” And ver. 18, “ As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.” So that our Saviour seems to me, in the parts of this prayer which are contained in the 6th, 7th, 8th, 12th, and 18th verses, to explain the meaning of His “ finishing the work that God had given Him to do,” in the 4th verse, to be “ that He had trained and prepared His apostles for their high and important trust :” which if they discharged as they ought, they would answer effectually all the ends for which He came into the world ; and bring those, “ by the glory of which He had given them, the same glory which the Father had given Him,” ver. 22, (that is, the power of the Holy Ghost,¹) “ to believe on Him through their word,” who had not believed in His own. And as we may gather from these parts of our Saviour's prayer laid together, that the training up His apostles was the work, or the main work, that God had given Him to do (it was all, except the few other disciples He made) ; so He expressly says, ver. 19, that it is for their sakes that He dies : “ And

¹ John i. 14

for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through me." As if He had said, "As the main business of my life has been to instruct and train up these my apostles, and prepare them for the mission I shall soon give them; so it is a principal design of giving myself up as a sacrifice, that I may enable them by my death, and what will follow it, my resurrection, ascension, and the sending of the Holy Ghost, to preach with success, and spread my kingdom in the world." For as "the Father sent Him, so sent He them,"¹ and as the Father "had appointed Him the kingdom, so did He appoint the kingdom to them."² And as soon as He was to be set on, or raised to, "the throne of His glory," they were "to sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."³ What words can well raise our idea of the office of the apostles higher, than that Jesus lived and died to prepare them for the due discharge of that trust?

SECTION XVIII.—*Why Christ appeared to few only after His resurrection.*

And as I think all the foregoing considerations of the apostolic office lead us naturally to reflect on the importance of that office; so they will enable us to give the fullest answer to a ques-

¹ John xx. 21.

² Luke xxii. 29.

³ Matt. xix. 28.

tion, that Celsus put to the Christians ; and which, at first sight, seems as puzzling as any question that was ever put to them : namely, why Jesus appeared only to a few, after His resurrection, and those His friends ; but did not shew Himself to the persons who had insulted and crucified Him ; to Pilate who had condemned Him ; and to the Jewish nation, who disbelieved Him ? But this consideration lets us see, that His shewing Himself to His disciples only, and making His apostles the only witnesses (among His disciples) of it to the world, who were thus vouched in their testimony, by the gifts of the Spirit ; was a stronger evidence to the truth of the resurrection of Christ, and the other facts which related to Him, and liable to less cavil and exception, than His appearing publicly after His resurrection to His enemies, and to the Jewish nation, could have been. For could His appearing to them have proved, that He had been actually dead, though now alive, so strongly as these twelve witnesses saying, that they saw Him, and heard Him, eat and drank, and conversed with Him forty days after His resurrection from the dead, according to His own prediction ? who (besides having all the characters of competent and faithful witnesses) could prove the truth of what they testified, (and convince mankind, that their Master had told them nothing but what was

true) by the gifts of the Holy Ghost ; which they, having received from Him after His ascension, exercised, and imparted to believers. Besides, that the wisdom of this method of attesting and proving the truth of these facts, is farther conspicuous in this, that the witnesses of these facts were the teachers of the doctrines of Christ ; and that thereby the same evidence confirmed both the facts and the doctrines of His religion ; and they mutually corroborated one another. So that, without mentioning other considerations, and particularly the peculiar fitness of this method, to transmit the facts and doctrines of Christianity to future ages, it was for very wise reasons, that (as St. Peter says) “ God shewed Christ openly, after He had raised Him from the dead ; not unto all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God ; even to us (apostles), who did eat and drink with Him, after He arose from the dead. And He commanded them to preach unto the people, and to testify that He was He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of the quick and of the dead ;”¹ which was what our Saviour Himself foretold,² when He tells His apostles, “ yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more : but ye see me.”

I do not pretend to give this as the only

¹ Acts x. 40—43.

² John xiv. 19.

answer that can be given to the objection of Celsus. What we have full and unquestionable testimony for, we must receive ; though we have not the conviction of our senses to confirm it ; or could not account why that conviction was not afforded us. But I mention this answer, only as a corollary that results from what I have said, of the great powers of the apostles ; and I do not offer at other answers, because it would divert me from my design.

It is for that reason, and two others, that I have not mentioned the integrity of the apostles, as witnesses ; though their integrity appears so fully, in the manifest disinterestedness and holiness of their lives. One of the other reasons is, that this integrity is not peculiar to the apostles, but common with them to all the first Christians. The other of those reasons is, that I have nothing to add to what has been so fully said on these heads by others. These considerations, and these only, have made me omit this their character, as witnesses : and not either overlooking, or undervaluing it. For I am very sensible, how much strength is added to the evidence of the truth of the doctrine, but especially of the testimony of the apostles, by their being foretold by Him that sent them ; that they should get nothing by either, but a bare maintenance ;

and that they must suffer great fatigue, reproach, imprisonment, scourging, and death, in publishing the facts and doctrines of Christianity to the world: and by that eminent self-denial, piety, and virtue, that shone in their conduct, altogether answerable to the character of men, who were fully persuaded of the truth of this prediction; and were ready to submit to every part of the charge of their Master; those of self-denial and patience under suffering not excepted.

SECTION XIX.—*It was necessary to an Apostle that he should have seen the Lord.*

I cannot have a more proper place than this, where I am treating of the powers of the apostles, to take notice of a peculiar honour and pre-eminence, which those who were, or were to be, apostles, seem to have had above Christians of any other rank in the church: namely, “of seeing the Lord,” and having “immediate revelations from Him, after His ascension.” Thus, at the vision of the sheet, the Lord said to Peter, “Arise, Peter, kill and eat;”¹ and then discovered to him, that he should go and preach the gospel to the proselytes of the gate.

¹ Acts x. 13, 14.

So likewise the glory of the Lord appeared to Saul, in the road to Damascus, and a voice said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And on Saul's saying, "Who art thou, Lord? and what wilt thou have me to do?" The Lord says, "Go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou shalt do."¹ So likewise the second time he was at Jerusalem, after his conversion, the Lord stood by him, "ordering him to depart from Jerusalem, where they would not receive his testimony, and go far thence to the Gentiles."² And when Paul was in the castle of Jerusalem, the Lord appeared to him, saying, "Be of good cheer, Paul, for as thou hast testified in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also of me at Rome;" in order to direct him to appeal to Cæsar; that so by that means he might have a fit opportunity to preach the gospel at the metropolis of the world.³ Whereas, when God saw fit to send Philip orders to meet the eunuch, the orders were delivered him by an angel.⁴ And so likewise when Peter had a vision of the Lord to go to Cornelius, Cornelius had only a vision of an angel to send for Peter.⁵

With such propriety and distinction are things managed in the economy or kingdom of Christ;

¹ Acts ix. 3. 8. ² Ibid. xxii. 17—22. ³ Ibid. xxiii. 11.

⁴ Ibid. viii. 26.

⁵ Ibid. x. 3—8.

and that not only with regard to the messengers, but to the message on which they are sent. When that is of great importance, and draws great consequences after it, the Lord Himself vouchsafes to give the message; and sends the apostles on the errands: as when they are ordered to go, and open the kingdom of heaven to the devout or idolatrous Gentiles; or to go to the seat of the empire of the world. But at other times, and on occasions of less importance, an angel is sent to them also; as to Peter,¹ and to Paul.² And yet, on the other hand, when it was necessary in a like case, the Lord appears to Ananias, a disciple;³ for Saul was to know, that it was the Lord, even Jesus, whose glory had appeared to him in the way, and had told him, that he should receive farther orders at Damascus; from whom he now received those orders by the mouth of Ananias. Wherefore the Lord in this case, out of the road of His common dispensations, appears to Ananias, and sends him to Saul, with particular instructions what to say, and to do, in relation to him: whereby Saul, who was to be the great apostle of the Gentiles, could not but be fully certified, that it was Jesus who had appeared to him in the way, and had ordered him to go to Damascus; since a man at

¹ Acts xiii. 7.² Ibid. xxvii. 23.³ Ibid. ix. 10.

Damascus, named Ananias, unknown to him, could come and tell him from the Lord, that the Lord had appeared to him (though that was unknown to any but Saul, even to his companions¹), and since, pursuant to what the Lord had said to him, of the farther orders he should receive at Damascus, he was sent by the Lord to bring those orders to him; and since, to assure him farther of the truth of all this, Saul had in a vision seen Ananias coming to him, and restoring to him his sight.

SECTION XX.—*The Apostles to be considered as ranked under the two divisions, the apostleship of the Jews, and the apostleship of the Gentiles.*

Thus far we have considered the apostles in common. But it may not be improper, on this occasion, to consider them as ranked under the apostleship of the Jews, and of the Gentiles. Their provinces seem to me to have been distinct: and the eleven chosen by our Saviour, with Matthias, making twelve, seem to have been the apostles of the circumcision; and

¹ Acts ix. 7. xxii. 9. The sense of the last place, in my apprehension, being, that “Paul’s companions heard, that is, understood not the voice, or the language in which the voice spake.”

Paul and Barnabas the apostles of the Gentiles. That these twelve were the apostles of the Jews, and that the other two were chiefly the apostles of the Gentiles, has been pretty generally allowed. But I am apt to think, that the twelve were the apostles of the Jews only, and not of the Gentiles; and that the other two were the apostles of the Gentiles only, and not of the Jews.

In all the accounts we have of the twelve, they preach to the Jews, and to the Jews only; that is, to Jews either by birth and nation (who were either Hebrew Jews of Jerusalem, Hebrew Jews of Judæa, of Galilee, or sprung from them, or Jews of Samaria) or by religion; that is, the proselytes of righteousness; and are some of those that are mentioned among the “devout men dwelling at Jerusalem, out of every nation;”¹ and who, generally, where they are mentioned in Scripture, happened to be Hellenist Jews, or Jews that spoke Greek as their mother tongue; and to them, and them alone, they write. Thus St. James writes to the twelve tribes.² That St. John writes his epistle to the Jews, appears from his writing so much of love and charity, against the zealots for the law; from his opposing those heretics who had sprung up from among the Jewish

¹ Acts ii. 10.

² James i. 1.

Christians; and particularly from his first epistle,¹ where he says, “Jesus is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.” I think it is the more probable it was written to the Jews, from his calling Christ “the Word;”² a style much more likely to be used by him to the Jews, than to the Gentiles. It is indeed difficult to determine to whom his second epistle is written; but she might be a Jewess for aught appears. His third epistle indeed seems to be addressed to a Gentile, Gaius being a Gentile name. But these two last are only epistles written to two particular persons; which therefore puts them out of the present consideration. Though I confess if Jude’s be a genuine epistle (which cannot be doubted when the evidence for its genuineness is fairly weighed), it seems to be written to Gentiles, an ancient copy having *τοῖς ἐθνεσιν ἐν Θεῷ*;³ and it being directed to them as “the Called,”⁴ which, if I mistake not, is used generally, if not only, of the Gentiles; and saying,⁵ what I think can scarce be supposed to be said to Jews. But perhaps this epistle was written after the death of Peter and Paul, the apostles of the devout and idolatrous Gentiles.

¹ 1 John ii. 2. ² Ibid. i. 1. ³ Ver. 1. Vide Mill. in loc.

⁴ Ibid. ⁵ Ver. 5.

Peter, indeed, after he had preached to these Jews from the year 33 to the year 41, went by especial direction from God, and preached to Cornelius and his family, proselytes of the gate ; who are called Gentiles, and were so by nation, but not by religion ; and had peculiar privileges among the Jews, on account of their worshipping the one true God, and of their abstaining from things offered to idols, fornication, things strangled, and from blood ; and who may be considered as free denizens among them.¹ And to these, Peter seems to have written his two epistles, as his more peculiar province. For he addresses his first epistle “ to the strangers scattered through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.”² These characters cannot belong to Jews, any more than that of “strangers scattered through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia ;” and which he repeats, ver. 17, and chap. ii. ver. 11 ; where the word is *παροίκους*, by which the Septuagint uses to denote “ the proselytes of the gate.” To this purpose St. Peter says,³ “ who (Christ) verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in

¹ See the Fourth Essay.² 1 Pet. i. 12.³ Ver. 20.

these last times for you," that is, "you Gentiles;" wherefore he says, that the angels desire to look into the things which the prophets prophesied should come unto you, and which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, agreeably to what St. Paul tells the Ephesians¹ about the angels; and what there is manifestly the mystery of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, and admitting them to the fellowship of the saints.² But what must put it out of doubt that they were not Jews is, that Peter tells them,³ "that in time past they were not a people, but were now a people; which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy; and were become," even in a more excellent sense³ than the Jews, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, to His praise, who had called them out of darkness, (that is, when they became proselytes of the gate; and at last) into His marvellous light" of the gospel. This is the most distinguishing character of the idolatrous Gentiles, being the words of the commission given to St. Paul, when he was first sent to convert them.⁴

¹ Chap. iii. 10. ² Ver. 2—12. ³ Chap. ii. 10.

⁴ Acts xxvi. 18, alluding to Isaiah ix. 1, 2, and to Mal. iv. 15, 16.

It must be observed also, that the word λαὸς, which is rendered “people” in our version, is used by the writers of the N. T. of Jews only: so that, when it is said they were not a people, it is strongly asserting that they were not Jews; but are now indeed become the people of God. And the same apostle also says,¹ “not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:” From hence likewise he asserts,² “that he who lacketh these things,” that is, faith, virtue, knowledge, &c. “is blind” (morally so); alluding to the darkness and ignorance in which they had been before they became worshippers of the true God: and bids them “abstain from fleshly lusts;” the lusts of the Gentiles, whose character it is “to work all uncleanness with greediness; among whom they had their conversation:”³ but from which they, even “as strangers” or proselytes of the gate, but much more as Christians, were to abstain. And besides, he says, most unexceptionably to this purpose,⁴ “For the time past of our lives may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.” From hence it is that St. Peter addresses his second epistle

¹ 1 Pet. i. 14.² 2 Pet. i. 9.³ 1 Pet. ii. 11, 12.⁴ Chap. iv. 3—6.

(written to the same persons as the first)¹ “to them who have obtained like faith with us,” that is, us Jews, “through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”² And that epistle also seems to distinguish them from the Jewish nation.³ But there were “false prophets among the people (ἐν τῷ λαῷ, the Jewish people), as there shall be false teachers among you.” Finally, that it was written to Gentiles, may be fairly collected from 1 Pet. iii. 6, “whose daughters (Sarah’s) ye are as long as ye do well;” that is, imitate her, as the Gentiles become the children of Abraham, by imitating him. But there was no reason to say, that they were Sarah’s daughters if they had been Jews. Tertullian, and Cyprian, accordingly quote the first epistle of Peter, as the epistle of Peter to those of Pontus, citing it under the title “*Epistola Petri ad Ponticos*.”⁴ Junilius inscribes it “*Epistola ad Gentes*,” or the epistle to the Gentiles.⁵ Nor can this epistle be written to the idolatrous Gentiles of those places, any more than to the Jews; but to such converted Gentile worshippers of the true God, of every nation, as happened to be scattered among them. “Strangers” is the style belonging to these. The

¹ 2 Pet. iii. 1.

² Ibid. i. 1.

³ Ibid. ii. 1.

⁴ Tert. Scorpiac. c. xii. and Cypr. lib. iii. ad Quirin. c. 36, 37. 39.

⁵ Lib. i. de Part. Div. Legis, c. 6. See Mill. 1 Pet. i. 1.

idolatrous Gentiles were never called strangers simply, and without any other addition : but such only as (though Gentiles) were the worshippers of the true God, and might, if they pleased, live in Palestine ; yet still as “ strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, and the covenant of promise.” St. Peter, therefore, distinguishes them from Gentiles :¹ “ Having (says he) your conversation honest among the Gentiles,” that is, the idolatrous Gentiles ; “ that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of their visitation.

What may farther serve to shew that Peter wrote to proselytes of the gate, is, that when he preaches to Cornelius and his family, the first-fruits of the proselytes of the gate ;² he says, “ of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but, in every nation, he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.” And in this epistle he speaks in the same strain ;³ “ and if ye call on the Father, who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.” And so likewise he uses the very peculiar phrase here, which he uses concerning Cornelius and his family,⁴ “ God

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 12.² Acts x. 34, 35.³ 1 Pet. i. 17.⁴ Acts xv. 9.

giving them the Holy Ghost, and purifying their hearts by faith," (*καθαρίσας τὰς καρδίας αὐτῶν*), alluding to the commission he had received from the Lord in a vision, to go and preach peace to the proselytes of the gate, in these words, "what God has cleansed (or purified, *ἐκαθάρισε*), that call not thou common or unclean."¹ And here,² "seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (*ἐκ καθαρᾶς καρδίας*); and 2 Pet. i. 9, to this purpose, he says, that "he that lacketh these things," namely, the Christian virtues he had been exhorting them to abound in, ver. 5—9, "is blind, and cannot (it should be "will not") (*μωπάζων*) see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged (or purified, or his purification, *τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ*) from his former sins." This expression seems to me to point to the proselytes of the gate; as "much as opening the eyes, and turning from darkness to light, and from Satan unto God," does to the idolatrous Gentiles. Wherefore, from Peter's using the same expressions in this epistle, as he does Acts x. and xv., one may naturally conclude, that he writes here to the same sort of persons, that he preached to, Acts x.; and spoke of, Acts xv. And, to confirm my opinion the more,

¹ Acts x. 15.

² 1 Pet. i. 22.

I would observe that he uses an expression to them, at the end of this epistle, that seems to be appropriated to the proselytes of the gate who believed ;¹ “ If any man suffer as a Christian,” &c. Now the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch ;² a church consisting chiefly, if not wholly, of proselytes of the gate ; as I shall make appear more fully in the Fourth Essay ; as I also shall what I apprehend was the reason of their taking that peculiar appellation, towards the end of this Essay. And what makes me lay the greater stress on this expression, “ as a Christian,” is, that I do not remember any of the other apostles ever use it in any of their epistles, either to believing Jews, or to the believers among the idolatrous Gentiles. And that the second epistle was addressed to the same with the first, we learn from 2 Pet. iii. 1. Perhaps St. Peter’s writing to proselyted Gentiles, converted to Christianity, may have been the reason why he sent his letter by Silvanus or Silas ; who used to travel over all these parts with St. Paul, converting the Gentiles, and confirming them ; and why he gives him his Roman, and not his Jewish name (Silvanus, and not Silas), the name he himself uses, when he writes to the Gentile believers.³

If it be objected that Peter addresses his

¹ 1 Pet. iv. 16. ² Acts xi. 26. ³ 1 Thess. i. 1. 2 Thess. i. 1.

epistle *παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς*, &c.; as James, one of the disciples of the circumcision, addresses his *δώδεκα φυλαῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ*, “to the twelve tribes dispersed;” I answer, that the *διασπορά* may be applied to dispersed Gentiles, as well as Jews: and is so evidently John vii. 35, “And the Jews said among themselves, Whither will He go, that we shall not find Him? will He go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles (it should be “to the dispersion of the Gentiles”), and teach the Gentiles?” *εἰς τὴν διασπορὰν τῶν Ἑλλήνων μέλλει πορεύεσθαι, καὶ διδάσκειν τοὺς Ἑλληνας*; and not only the grammar shews it ought to be rendered “the dispersion of the Gentiles,” and not “the dispersed among the Gentiles,” but the sentence that follows, “and teach the Gentiles.” And the Syriac version, the most accurate of any, renders it, “the dispersion of the profane;” that is, the heathen, “and teach the profane.” And so that excellent critic Castalio renders it, “Num in dispersas Græcorum nationes discessurus est, docturusque Græcos?” And we read of the “dispersed children of God,”¹ in opposition to the Jewish nation, *Καὶ οὐχ ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἔθνους μόνον, ἀλλ’ ἵνα καὶ τὰ τέκνα τοῦ Θεοῦ τὰ διεσκορπισμένα συναγάγω εἰς ἓν.*

St. John, indeed, by express direction from

¹ John xi. 52.

Him who holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, and who walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks,"¹ writes to the seven churches of Asia. But it must be observed, that, if those he writes to in those seven churches were Gentiles, yet it was long after the death of St. Paul and Barnabas, their two apostles : the book of the Revelation having been written in the year 96, and St. Paul suffered martyrdom an. 67, and Barnabas, in all likelihood, before that. Though I should rather incline to think, that what was written to the churches in those cities, was written to the believing Jews there only. At least that is pretty plain, in the case of the church of Pergamos,² of Thyatira,³ which Grotius says was composed of Jews,⁴ of Philadelphia;⁵ and perhaps of Ephesus too.⁶ And if what he wrote to these four churches was written to believing Jews, we may well conclude that the other three epistles were so too. This, I think, may serve to remove this objection, if these epistles were actually written to those seven churches, and are not to be understood in a mystical sense ; as representing the state of the Christian church, in a future septenary period, as some very good judges have thought.

And as the apostles of the circumcision

¹ Rev. ii. 1.

² Ver. 12. 14.

³ Ver. 20.

⁴ Grot. on Revel. ii. 18.

⁵ Rev. iii. 9.

⁶ Ibid. ii. 7.

preached and wrote to Jews only, and St. Peter to the Jews or proselytes of the gate ; so St. Paul is sent to the idolatrous Gentiles, and chiefly preached and wrote to them : at least when he preached or wrote in the character of an apostle, after his becoming one. He is sent only to them, as he himself relates the matter.¹ Accordingly he first preaches to Sergius Paulus, at his desire ; then to the idolatrous Gentiles at Antioch in Pisidia, at theirs : and travels through all the Lesser Asia, Macedonia, Greece, Italy, and, perhaps Spain, preaching to them. He often assures us, that he was “ the apostle of the Gentiles.” He tells the Romans,² “ I speak to you, Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles ; I magnify my office.” And he makes this his character, his excuse for writing to them so freely,³ “ Nevertheless, I have written the more boldly to you, in some sort, as putting you in mind of the grace that is given me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God ; that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable ; being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.” Just as he had said before,⁴ “ That Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision ;” who says of Himself, that He

¹ Acts xxvi. 17, 18. ² Rom. xi. 13. ³ Ibid. xv. 18.

⁴ Ver. 8.

was only “sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”¹ And on the account of this his character and office, as an apostle of the Gentiles, he writes to the Romans, as a part of his province, though he had never seen them.² For then he had been “no farther than the borders of Illyricum;”³ that is, that part of Greece that joins to Illyricum. He also tells the Romans, “that he was their debtor; and a debtor both to the Greeks and Barbarians, both to the wise and unwise,”⁴ that is, all the Gentiles: speaking in the style of the Greeks, who, being proud of their learning and politeness, called themselves Greeks and the Wise, and all others the Barbarians and the Unwise. And Paul says, he is their debtor, inasmuch as he was intrusted with the gospel on their account; and had the dispensation of it committed to him for their sakes. And therefore adds, that “he is ready to preach the gospel to them that are at Rome also.”⁵ But he says nothing of his being a debtor to the Jews, as well as to the Gentiles: a phrase that is very natural to him, when there is any occasion for it. He likewise acquaints Timothy, a circumcised Jew,⁶ “That Christ gave Himself a ransom for all” (that is, for Gentiles as well as

¹ Luke xv. 24.² Rom. i. 13.³ Ibid. xv. 15.⁴ Ibid. i. 13—16.⁵ Ver. 15.⁶ 1 Tim. ii. 6, 7.

Jews), “to be testified in due time” (that is, to be testified by me, in the time when God had prepared men and things for it; by spreading the gospel first among the Jews, then among the devout Gentiles, and by the rest of the Jews at last rejecting it), and “whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity (that is, to testify which truth, namely, that He was a ransom for all, in its due and proper time), I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle (that is, a witness and teacher) of the Gentiles.” St. Paul likewise speaks to the same purpose.¹ Moreover he put himself under the same predicament with Barnabas (who was only an apostle of the Gentiles), and ranks himself with him, in opposition to the apostles of the Jews.² And St. Paul and Barnabas are acknowledged as apostles of the Heathens, or the Gentiles only, by the three great apostles; who challenged to themselves, and the other apostles, the sole character of apostles of the circumcision; as St. Paul informs the Galatians: adding, that “He that wrought effectually in Peter, to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same wrought mightily in me towards the Gentiles.”³ And it is very remarkable, that he says this to the Galatians, when

¹ 1 Tim. i. 11.

² 1 Cor. ix. 1—7.

³ Gal. iii. 8, 9.

he is vindicating his own authority against his adversaries : and when, we may suppose, he would therefore carry it as far as he could. Finally, Paul is a prisoner for many years on account of the gospel that he preached to the Gentiles,¹ glories in the chains he bears on that account ;² and says,³ “ that his deliverance out of the mouth of the lion” (Nero or Helius Cæsariensis) was “ that the preaching (that is, of the Gentile gospel) might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear.”

It makes very much to this purpose to observe, that St. Paul speaks of the gospel that he preached to the Gentiles, 1. as a revelation made to him ; and, 2. as his peculiar gospel ; at least, as the gospel of himself and Barnabas. I refer the reader for the proof of the first to the Third Essay ; and to what I have touched on this head before in this Essay. And I think he will be convinced of the truth of the second, by the following texts : “ By whom (Christ) we have received grace and apostleship for the obedience to the faith among all nations for His name.”⁴ “ Now unto Him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel ; and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept

¹ Acts xxii. 21, 22. ² Gal. iv. 17. Phil. i. 12, 13, 14.
Col. i. 24. ³ 2 Tim. iv. 17. ⁴ Rom. i. 5.

secret since the world began ; but now is made manifest—to all nations.”¹ “ Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel, which I preached unto you.”² “ And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us (Gentiles) to Himself, and hath given us (Paul, or perhaps Paul and Barnabas) the mystery of reconciliation : to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.—And hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ.”³ “ But when it pleased God—to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathens.”⁴ “ But they had heard only that he—now preacheth the faith that he once destroyed.”⁵ “ Then fourteen years after I went up to Jerusalem—and communicated the gospel which I now preach among the Gentiles.”⁶ “ But when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed to me (Paul), they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go unto the heathen.”⁷ “ That the Gentiles should be partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel ; whereof I was made a minister.—Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the

¹ Rom. xvi. 15. ² 1 Cor. xv. 1. ³ 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, 20.

⁴ Gal. i. 15, 16. ⁵ Ver. 23. ⁶ Ibid. ii. 1, 2. ⁷ Ver. 7.

Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ.”¹ “Which is the church whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me, even the mystery hid from ages. To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the Son of glory.”² “For our gospel came not to you in word only.”³ “Whereunto he called you by our gospel,”⁴ “According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.”⁵ “Whereunto I am ordained a preacher and an apostle, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.”⁶ “But hath in due times, manifested His word through preaching, which is committed unto me, according to the commandment of God our Saviour.”⁷

Agreeably to the character of an apostle of the Gentiles, he writes his epistles to churches that were full of idolatrous Gentiles converted to the faith: so much is acknowledged by all. And I am apt to believe (and should be glad this matter might be thoroughly considered) that he wrote them only to believing Gentiles in those churches. I think, when this matter is duly considered, it will appear, that St. Paul

¹ Eph. iii. 6. ² Col. i. 24, 25. ³ 1 Thess. i. 5.

⁴ 2 Thess. ii. 14. ⁵ 1 Tim. i. 11. ⁶ Ibid. ii. ver. 6, 7.

⁷ Tit. i. 3.

wrote his epistles to the Gentile believers only (if the believing Jews and Gentiles did use to meet in one assembly, and had not separate ones), from the character he takes to himself in those epistles, the characters he gives those he addresses himself to, and the strain, and several particular passages, of the epistles themselves. Though, I confess, in some of them, he introduces a Jew, that he may the better shew the Gentiles, the falseness of the Jewish reasoning, or the vanity of their pretensions.¹ Thus, I think, St. Paul wrote to the Gentiles; as the other apostles, at least during the life of St. Paul, wrote only to the Jews, or proselytes.

Though it seems plain to me that St. Paul wrote the epistle to the Hebrews, yet he does not write it in the character of an apostle, beginning the epistle, "Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ," &c. as he always does in his epistles to the Gentile churches; but, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake unto the Fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son,"² &c. Nor does he ever in that epistle give them any order or commandment, or exercise any act of authority; on the contrary, He points their obedience to others, and, in my apprehension,

¹ Particularly, Rom. ii. and vii. Col. ii. 20. ad fin. and iii. 1—5.

² See the First Essay.

to the Jewish apostles residing at Jerusalem ;¹ and desires only their prayers for himself.²

And though St. Paul always first preached to the Jews, wherever there were Jews in the places to which he came ; and says himself, that “ he had testified (the word which I own denotes the manner of preaching peculiar to an apostle) to Jews as well as Greeks ;”³ yet it is plain he did not go to those places in quest of Jews, but of Gentiles. And that he first testified, or preached, to Jews in those places where there were both Jews and Gentiles, was, as I apprehend, to take away the pretence of complaint, or offence, from the Jews, which they might have had, if the gospel had not been first offered to them, and their furious opposition to it (for which reason also he offers it to the Gentiles only, after the Jews had rejected it) ; as also, that he might, if possible, provoke his brethren the Jews to jealousy (as he says on the like occasion, Rom. xi. 14). But I do not find that he acts in the character of an apostle towards them, in any other way than that of testifying to them. At least, we have no instance of his conferring the Holy Ghost on those Jews to whom he testified ; or of his inflicting bodily distempers on any of them,

¹ Heb. xiii. 17.
and the Abstract.

² Ver. 18. See the First Essay,

³ Acts xx, 21.

for the offences any of them committed ; or of his working any of his special miracles among them. Unless we suppose Timothy a Jew ; who was indeed a Jew by the law of Judæa, as born of a Jewish woman, but his father was a Greek.¹

I can by no means think the epistle usually ascribed to Barnabas to be his : yet it is evidently writ to the Gentiles ; as may plainly appear, in the translation of it by our most reverend Primate, Dr. Wake. Which makes me very much surprised to find his Grace say, in his dissertation concerning Barnabas (in which, I confess, however, his Grace is far from being singular) that this epistle was written to the Jews : those passages which I refer to making it clear beyond all exception that it was written to the Gentiles ; and there being none, that seem to me to give much colour to the contrary opinion. However, this epistle is a very ancient forgery ; and may serve to shew, that the person who forged it, writing it to the Gentiles, knew well that his character was that of an apostle of the Gentiles ; and that it was therefore forging in character to address his epistle to those of his own province.

¹ Acts chap. xvi.

SECTION XXI.—*Objections answered.*

It may, perhaps, be objected against what I have advanced “of the separate provinces of the apostles of the Jews and of the Gentiles,” that it would be strange, if none of the twelve apostles should have preached to the Gentiles, when our Saviour commands the eleven “to go, and preach the gospel to all nations (μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη);”¹ and, as St. Mark relates it, to “go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”² But I hope it will be thought a sufficient answer to this difficulty,

1. That St. Peter and the rest of the apostles preached the gospel, at the feast of Pentecost,³ “to Jews, devout men out of every nation dwelling at Jerusalem.” It is the same word (ἄνδρες εὐλαβεῖς ἀπὸ παντὸς ἔθνους τῶν ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν), but with a stronger expression added to it. And thus the apostles and first Christians understood Christ’s commission; for when they went out of Judæa, “they preached to the Jews only.”⁴

2. That St. Peter first preached to the proselytes of the gate;⁵ and, it is very probable, that he preached to them at other times, and other

¹ Matt. xxviii. 19. ² Mark xvi. 15. ³ Acts ii. 5.

⁴ Ibid. xi. 19. ⁵ Ibid. x.

places, afterwards ; since he writes to them that were scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,¹ and writes to them as if he had formerly preached or written to them : for he writes “ to put them in remembrance,”² and writes in several parts of both his epistles, as being well acquainted with them and their affairs.

3. If this will not satisfy, yet let it be considered, that Paul and Barnabas went and preached to the idolatrous Gentiles, or the nations, or, as St. Paul says, “ to every creature under heaven.”³ And though they were not of the eleven, to whom Christ personally gave the commission, yet they had the same office with them. So that the meaning of our Saviour is, “ Go ye, or such as shall be afterwards in the same office with you (that is, Matthias, Paul, and Barnabas), and teach all nations. Or, Go ye into all the world, and preach to every creature ; that is, to people of every country, age, sex, rank, and distinction ;” as the fourteen apostles did : having preached Christ to high and low, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, Jew and Gentile, Barbarian and Scythian, bond and free.

However, though I am of opinion that the Jewish and Gentile apostles had their distinct

¹ 1 Pet. i. 1.

² 2 Pet. i. 12.

³ Col. i. 24.

provinces, yet I am withal apt to think, that the proselytes of the gate were of a mixt province : and that as St. Peter preached, and addressed epistles to them, so did St. Paul too ; which gives Peter occasion to say, in the end of his second epistle,¹ “ And account that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation, even as our brother St. Paul also, according to the wisdom given him, hath written unto you ; as also in his other epistles.” Which writing to them, St. Peter distinguishing from all his other epistles, would make one apt to conclude that St. Paul had written some epistle to the strangers scattered, or the proselytes of the gate, converted to Christianity, which is not come to our hands ; especially since what St. Peter refers to in St. Paul’s epistles is not very obvious in any of those epistles of his which we have.

It does not suit with my design, to enter into the particular tempers of these twelve prime ministers of the kingdom of Christ ; or to shew from passages and hints in Scripture that St. Peter was always president of the apostles whilst they continued together, by virtue of Jesus’ appointment ; though, after they dispersed and left Jerusalem, James seems to have presided when they met there ; how each of their tempers was suited to their high office ;

¹ Chap. iii. 15, 17.

and how all these different tempers, by a happy mixture and agreement, combined to the furthering of the gospel : in which the wisdom of God in choosing them, and giving them to Jesus, would appear. But it may not be improper to say something of their number ; and of the very different characters of the twelve apostles of the Jews, and of the two apostles of the Gentiles.

SECTION XXII.—*Probable reasons, why twelve Apostles were appointed by our Lord, and only two afterward ; and why persons of another description were not selected.*

I do not pretend to be able to enter precisely into the reasons, why our Saviour appointed but twelve apostles first, and two afterwards, in all but fourteen : and why He chose illiterate and ignorant men, of the lowest calling and occupation, for the first twelve ; and men of letters and education for the two last ; namely, Barnabas, a Levite, and Paul, who was a tent-maker (according to the known custom of the Jews, who always bred up their children to some trade), but brought up, at the same time in all the learning of the Jews, at the feet of Gamaliel ; as Moses had been in all the learning of the Egyptians, at Pharaoh's court. But

thus much, I think, in general, fairly offers itself, on both these heads, to our observation.

It was not proper to have only two or three for witnesses of the facts, and teachers of the doctrine of Christianity ; lest there might have been a pretence to suspect them of conspiracy : which, to be sure, two or three are always more capable of carrying on than fourteen. And, on the other hand, it was not fit to have a great many ; lest there should not have been so apparent and visible a distinction between the witnesses and the teachers, and those to whom the facts and the doctrines were to be imparted. By which distinction, the truth of their testimony, and doctrine, was to receive a great confirmation. Since by this means fourteen private men, and they only, could vouch these facts and doctrines, in a manner which must convince all that were well disposed, where they came. And when one of these witnesses betrayed Jesus, and then presently hanged himself, for betraying Him (thereby bearing witness to the innocence of Jesus) ; the rest, not at all discouraged at this man's fate, presently propose another witness should be appointed to fill up his place. This, by the way, Providence directed them to do, before the feast of Pentecost was fully come ; that so he being added to the eleven before that time, might, together with them, receive the descent

of the Holy Ghost; to qualify him to be a witness, and a revealer of the Christian doctrine, as well as the rest.

The men of birth and education were generally too bigoted to the opinions and temper of the Pharisees, to embrace the doctrine of Christ, or too worldly-minded to leave the care of their affairs, and the pursuits of their designs, and expose themselves to the fury of the Jews, to become His disciples, and follow Him; especially in such a manner as it was necessary for those to do who were to be His apostles; that is, to be always with Him, or to be sent out by Him. We see how some of these passions wrought on men otherwise well disposed to Him, as Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea. Besides, that our Saviour might have been unwilling to take men of birth and education for His apostles and companions, if they had been willing to follow Him; lest it might have created in the government a jealousy of His designs. But I shall chiefly insist on two other reasons for Jesus' taking illiterate men for the twelve, as being most suited to my purpose. It was proper to take such for the twelve, rather than men of learning and experience; that so they might follow Jesus in His lifetime, without prying too much into the designs of His coming into the world: which was not to take temporal power, but to die by

the wicked hands of Jews and Gentiles. Men of learning, parts, or business, with the temper and notions which prevailed universally among the people to whom He was sent, would not have been kept easily in that dependance, without enquiring much earlier than they did (long before the time of His approaching crucifixion) when, and how, He would have set up His kingdom in the world ? and if they had not received an answer, from seeing no likelihood of its being effected at all ; or if they had been told, that it was to be done by His being crucified ; from the supposed unfitness of the means, they would, in all probability, have taken offence, and have left Him, as others did upon other occasions. Such men were neither capable of bearing to be put off without an answer ; nor of the answer that must have been given them. Our Saviour, therefore, chose these honest, illiterate men, who, from a high opinion of His wisdom, and a very low one of their own capacities, followed Him whithersoever He went ; without having many difficulties occur to their own thoughts, and without troubling Him with those they had : leaving them all to His conduct ; from a full persuasion that He would overcome them. All those who (being given Him by God out of the world) thus loved Him, and believed on Him, He kept ; but the son of perdition : a man of a

false, injurious, covetous, and greedy mind. And when our Saviour left His apostles, and ascended up to heaven, what strength did it give to the evidence of His religion, that these twelve mean, illiterate men, should have the courage and the ability to testify the great facts relating to Jesus of Nazareth, and teach His doctrine to all the people of Jerusalem (where He had been crucified but a little before), and even to the rulers, who had not only great power, but, as was generally thought, the sole knowledge of the law ; and should dare to do it, notwithstanding their menaces, their scourging, their imprisonment, and at last the putting one of them (James) to death. This we see struck the rulers themselves, those obstinate enemies of Jesus. For perceiving the “ boldness of these apostles, men that were illiterate and ignorant,” they perceived it must be “ from their having been with Jesus.” ¹

But after that the religion of Christ was received by vast multitudes of Jews and devout Gentiles, objections against men of education ceased ; and the reasons turned quite another way. Two men of letters are therefore sent, to reason with the Gentiles, and recover them to the knowledge of the one living true God, for which knowledge and learning was highly

¹ Acts iv. 13.

conducive, and to testify and preach the gospel to the Gentiles. They could not then pry too closely into the facts and doctrines of Christianity. They would only thereby acquire a more enlarged and extensive view of the excellency and comprehension of this dispensation of religion; and from thence be brought with St. Paul, in holy rapture, to think of “the height and depth, the length and breadth of the love of God in it, that passeth knowledge;” and with him, to say within themselves, “how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways of mercy past finding out!”

But as the Gentiles sought after a vain philosophy, which they called wisdom, and fine elocution, which they called eloquence; St. Paul renounced the false philosophy of the schools, and was rendered of a stammering speech, and a mean appearance; that so that success he had in preaching the gospel might appear to be of God, and not of man.¹

These exalted thoughts of it must necessarily push them on to undergo all fatigues, and run all hazards, in propagating it to the world; make them more fit to dispute with Jews, and heathen philosophers; to bring down every high thing, and proud imagination against the knowledge of God, and captivate every thought to

¹ See the Third Essay.

the obedience of Christ; and render them the more likely to convince mankind, that nothing but the clearest and strongest evidence could have turned men of their knowledge and zeal in the Jewish religion, and the peculiar interest one of them (a Levite) had in it, to embrace the faith of Jesus, and run this infinite toil, reproach, and hazard, to spread it in the world.

SECTION XXIII.—*St. Paul, and the other Apostles, compared.*

Before I finish what I have to offer about the apostles, I will take this occasion to compare St. Paul with “the apostles of the circumcision,” and, chiefly, with St. Peter and St. John, the greatest of them; the better to make out St. Paul’s assertion, that he was “not a whit behind the very greatest of the apostles.”¹

Were they sent by God and Christ? so was he.² Did three of them see the most excellent glory, and hear a voice from it, at Christ’s transfiguration in the mount? so did he, in the road to Damascus. Did they receive instructions from Christ on earth, touching the gospel they were to preach? and from the Spirit after His ascension? St. Paul was not only filled with the Holy Ghost;³ but had all the gospel he was to

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 5. ² Acts xxii. 17. 18. 21. xxvi. 17. ³ Ibid. ix. 17.

preach revealed to him immediately by Christ.¹ Had St. Peter, whilst he was in a trance (being at prayer on a house-top), a vision of the Lord, to commission him to go to the proselytes of the gate; and the matter he was to preach to them, taught him by that revelation? St. Paul, falling into a trance, had also a vision of Christ, whilst he was praying in the temple; received a commission to go and preach to the idolatrous Gentiles, and a revelation of what he was to teach them. Did they see Christ ascend, till a cloud of glory took Him out of their sight; and receive a message from angels to strengthen their faith? He was caught up into Paradise, and the third heaven, and “heard unspeakable things, that it is not lawful for a man to utter,”² to encourage him in his work. Had St. John great knowledge of future events about the church? so had St. Paul; he having communicated to us, not only the mystery of the casting off the Jews, of the recalling them, and of the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles; but the mystery of iniquity, that was to corrupt the doctrine of the gospel. Whilst we have an account but of one or two visions of Peter’s, we have an account of seven of Paul’s.³ Does St. Peter rebuke Simon

¹ Gal. i. 12. ² 2 Cor. xii. 2. 4. See the Third Essay.

³ Acts ix. 8. xxii. 18. compared with 2 Cor. xii. 2. Gal. ii. 12. Acts xvi. 9. xviii. 9, 10. xxiii. 11. and xxvii. 23, 24.

Magus with all authority ?¹ St. Paul reprimands Elymas with no less.² Did St. Peter once strike Ananias and Sapphira dead, two believers, who dissembled and lied to the Holy Ghost? St. Paul did not only strike Elymas the sorcerer blind, “when he perverted the right ways of the Lord;” but had a rod committed to him for edification, and not for destruction ; and delivered over to Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, “that the Spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord; that wicked men might learn not to blaspheme.” Did St. Peter and St. John cure a cripple, lame from his mother’s womb, at the temple? so did Paul at Lystra. Did St. Peter’s shadow cure the sick? so did handkerchiefs sent from St. Paul’s body.³ Did St. Peter raise Dorcas? St. Paul also raised Eutychus.⁴ Did God vouchsafe to send His angel to open the prison-doors, to deliver St. Peter? ⁵ so did God likewise by a great earthquake shake the foundations of the prison, into which St. Paul and Silas were cast at Philippi, and opened all the doors.⁶

In other respects St. Paul elegantly compares himself with them. “I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak; howbeit, whereinsoever any is bold (I speak foolishly), I am bold also. Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they

¹ Acts viii. 20—24. ² Ibid. xiii. 10, 11. ³ Ibid. xix. 12.

⁴ Ibid. xx. 12.

⁵ Ibid. xii. 7—11. ⁶ Ibid. xvi. 25, 26.

the seed of Abraham? so am I. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more: in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one; thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep. In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren. In weariness and painfulness, in watching often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness: besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore knoweth, that I lie not. In Damascus, the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of Damascenes, with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me; and through a window, in a basket, was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.”¹

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 21—33.

Upon the whole, I think, the apostles may be very properly said to be chief and primary ministers of the kingdom of Christ, commissioned and commanded by God to witness the resurrection of Christ, on their having seen and heard Him, after He was risen from the dead, and the other great facts of Christianity, as far as they had been eye or ear-witnesses of them ; and to publish the doctrines and mysteries of the gospel ; being first endued with superior courage, in order to enable them the better to testify and publish the gospel, to the greatest audience, and in times of the greatest danger ; and vested with extraordinary and uncommon powers of inflicting grievous distempers and death on obstinate offenders, and of curing diseases, and of imparting the Holy Ghost to believers, for the confirmation of the truth of what they were to testify, teach, and foretell.

PART II.—ON THE ELDERS.

SECTION I.—*Inquiry into the meaning of the word Elders—They were probably “the Apostles’ Company.”*

THUS I have considered the apostles, in their general, special, and comparative characters. It seems a more difficult matter to fix the precise notion of an “Elder,” as it stands here; the name occurring but once before this in the Acts, and then without any description; “Then the disciples—determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea—which also they did, and sent it to the elders, by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.”¹ It seems as if it was known that the apostles were absent from Jerusalem at this time; or how came the disciples at Antioch to send it to the elders, and not to the apostles?

It seems evident that St. Peter was not then there; he having left the city, on his being delivered out of prison by the angel;² and his

¹ Acts xi. 29, 30.

² Ibid. xii. 17.

being gone from Jerusalem was, in all probability, one reason of Mark's going from Jerusalem with Barnabas and Saul' (the other was that Mark was nephew to Barnabas,² and that Barnabas had likewise been a great companion of Peter's, as well as Mark); as he, in all probability, left St. Paul, and Barnabas, and returned to Jerusalem,³ on hearing that St. Peter was then returned thither, on the death of Herod, who had put him in prison. For Mark affected St. Peter extremely, as he was extremely affected by him.⁴

Besides, it may be very justly inferred, that none of the apostles were present at Jerusalem at this time, which was the second time of Paul's being there after his conversion; because St. Paul makes no mention of his being there this time, in his epistle to the Galatians, chap. i. when he mentions his being there the first and the third time after his conversion: whereas, if any of the apostles had been there at this time, it would have been necessary to the thread of his argument, to have given as particular an account of what had passed between him and the apostles at this second time of his being there, as at the first, or third: his object being to shew the Galatians, that he did not learn his

¹ Acts xii. 23.

² Col. iv. 10.

³ Acts xiii. 13.

⁴ 1 Pet. v. 13, Acts xii. 12—23.

gospel from any of the apostles, but from Christ alone. To which end he tells them, that he saw none of the apostles the first time, but Peter and James ; and that the third time, he would not let Titus be circumcised ; and was so far from learning from the three chief apostles, that he communicated his gospel to them, and them only ; and was owned as a fellow-apostle by them.¹ What reason can be imagined, why St. Paul did not give the Galatians as particular an account of what passed at the second, as at the first and third time of his being at Jerusalem, after his conversion ; but that, there having been none of the apostles this second time of his being there, it was altogether unnecessary for him to say any thing to them about it ?

And though some have thought, that by the elders, to whom the disciples sent their alms, the “elders of the Jewish nation” are meant ; yet I think that very unlikely, for many reasons, particularly these two : 1st, Because that the author of this history takes care that we should not mistake the elders of the Jewish nation, when they are meant on other occasions ; and in one particularly, where we are less liable to mistake them than here, by distinguishing them accordingly,² where he informs us, that the centurion

¹ Gal. ii. 1—11.

² Luke vi. 5.

“sent the elders of the Jews to Jesus.” If St. Paul and Barnabas had delivered the alms to elders of the Jews, I doubt not but he would have added those words “of the Jews” here, as he does there: 2d, Because it is evident that “the disciples at Antioch determined to send relief to the brethren, which dwelt in Judæa;”¹ by which the Jewish believers, and not the Jewish nation, are undoubtedly meant. Just as after he became an apostle of the idolatrous Gentiles, the alms, which he carried along with him, he carried from the Gentile to the Jewish believers, and not to such as were barely of the Jewish nation;² according to the agreement made between the apostles of the circumcision, and the two apostles of the Gentiles.³ And that therefore he was by no means likely to put these alms into the hands of the elders of the Jewish nation, but of the elders of the church. Now, by the elders acting here in the absence of the apostles, as well as by their being placed next to the apostles in the letter,⁴ it seems very plain that they held the next rank to the apostles. But what should give them that rank, deserves well to be considered.

It seems to me to have been this, “That they

¹ Acts xi. 29.

² See Rom. xv. 25, 26, 27. 31. 1 Cor. xvi. 1. 2 Cor. ix. 1—15.

³ Gal. ii. 10.

⁴ Acts xv. 23.

were such as had been the disciples of our Saviour, and had accompanied with Him from the beginning, heard His doctrine, saw His miracles, and His person, as well after as before His resurrection from the dead ; and who, being of the one hundred and twenty, at the feast of Pentecost, had the Holy Ghost fall upon them, filling them with a plentiful measure of His choicest gifts, without the laying on of hands ; ” and who, if I mistake not, are called “ the apostles’ company.” ¹

SECTION II.—*Passages in which the word “ Elder” occurs.*—*The first teachers of Christianity next to the Apostles, were selected from the Elders, to succeed in the government of the churches.*

As these were great and high “ privileges and endowments,” they could not but “ give a man a rank in the church.” Age gives a man a rank and authority in the world ; especially where it is attended with remarkable degrees of wisdom and experience. This was all the authority that the elders of the children of Israel can well be supposed to have had, which are mentioned in Exodus, when Moses, being sent to the children of Israel,² or to the elders of the children of Israel,³ went and gathered their elders together,

¹ Acts iv. 21.² Exod. iii. 11—16.

Ver. 18.

or the fathers or heads of families ; for so jealous a government as that of the Egyptians, and who oppressed the children of Israel so severely, were not like to let them have any magistrates of their own nation. They were all under Egyptian task-masters. And that these elders were not judges, or officers of the people, is plain, because Moses found no such officers, or judges, among them ; but appointed them, on finding the trouble of judging all causes himself, and on Jethro's advice, to ease himself of all causes in the first instance.¹ And this, if I mistake not, is the first time that we meet with the word “ Elder ” in Scripture. In analogy to these first elders, the seventy, and the chief magistrates of cities are called “ the Elders, the Elders of the people, or of the city,” through the Old and New Testament. They were generally men of age and experience, but always taken from those who were thought to be the most wise and prudent.²

¹ Exod. xviii. 13—27. See Seld. de Syn. l. i. c. 15. p. 624. ed. Lond. See Exod. xviii. 25. xxiv. 1. 9. Num. xi. 25.

² See Vitring. de Synag. l. iii. part. 1. p. 613—620. And that Elders signified men of age and experience among the Jews, I think, will fully appear from 2 Kings xix. 2, though I do not remember that Vitringa quotes it. For there it is said, that “ Hezekiah sent Eliakim—and the elders of the priests.” See the discussion of the question

And in analogy to the first and second sort of elders among the Jews, it is highly probable, that those Christians who had been the first and oldest disciples of Christ, and had thereby had such advantages of being personally acquainted with the doctrines, miracles, and history of Christ, should be styled the Elders in the Christian church, and have a rank in it accordingly. We see that being a Christian early is always reckoned an honour. St. John says,¹ “I write unto you, fathers, because ye have (this vast advantage and peculiar privilege, to have) known Him that was from the beginning” (ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς); that is, Christ, as is plain from the context and the phrase itself (τὸν ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς). St. Paul speaks of it as the glory of the Jewish believers, “that they first trusted in Christ.”² And so St. James says to the twelve tribes, “That God begat them of His own will, that they should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures”³ (or new creatures). And St. John gives this high character to the heavenly assembly, which he saw in vision, that they “were the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb.”⁴ St. Luke mentions one Mnason of Cyprus, with a

concerning the Elders, in the notes to the second vol. of the “Arrangement of the New Testament,” page 158. 166.

¹ 1 John ii. 13.

² Eph. i. 12.

³ James i. 18.

⁴ Rev. xiv. 4.

note of distinction, that he was “an old disciple.”¹ And St. Paul gives it as a mark of honour to the house of Stephanus and Epenetus, that “they were the first-fruits of Achaia;”² and to Andronicus and Junia, his kinsmen, “that they were in Christ before him.”³ — And I believe in this sense we are to understand St. Paul, when he gives thanks to God for the Thessalonians, “That God had chosen them from the beginning”⁴ (*ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς*), or perhaps it should be read *ἀπαρχὰς*, that he had chosen them to be the first-fruits, or the beginnings of conversion in Macedonia, which always had a greater portion of the gifts of the Spirit;⁵ for so they were in that which was properly and anciently called Macedonia, which Philippi was not. And if Philippi be excluded, Thessalonica was then the first-fruits of Macedonia. For St. Paul only passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia to go to Thessalonica.⁶ The sense may be, that he thanks God that he had chosen them as the first-fruits of that part of Macedonia where Thessalonica stood. I incline to this sense the rather, because it gives a particular force and beauty to St. Paul’s thanksgiving for these Thessalonians. In any other sense there can be no reason assigned, why he

¹ Acts xxi. 16.

² 1 Cor. xvi. 15.

³ Rom. xvi. 5, 7.

⁴ 2 Thess. ii. 13.

⁵ See p. 156.

⁶ Acts xvii. 1.

should thank God for choosing them from the beginning, rather than others. For in any other sense all other churches, as well as they, were chosen from the beginning.—And the advantage that age, either in years or Christianity, gave, we may learn from St. Paul's direction to 'Timothy,'¹ “Rebuke not an elder (man), but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; the elder women as mothers, the younger as sisters, with all purity:” And from the direction that St. Peter gives, 1 Pet. v. 5, 6, where, after he had described the duty of the elders, from ver. 1 to 5, he adds, “Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder: yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore,” &c. Nothing can be plainer, than that age in years, or Christianity, or both, made the elder here, since the younger are only called upon to submit to them, and since the reason for their submission is couched in the relation that the younger bear to the elder.

To shew the vast advantage that an elder had, in the view it stands in here (that is, one who from his early discipleship was well acquainted with the doctrines, miracles, and his-

¹ 1 Tim. v. 1, 2.

tory of Christ), when they were going to fill up the room of Judas, Peter says, ¹ “Wherefore of these men which have accompanied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection.” Our Saviour tells His apostles, “And ye also shall bear witness of me, because ye have been with me from the beginning” ² (ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς). St. John, knowing how much stress was laid on this reason for their being appointed witnesses, says, in his Epistle, ³ “That which was from the beginning (ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς), which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life—that—declare we unto you.” And so likewise St. Luke says, “Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word” ⁴ (ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς αὐτόπται). And St. Peter seems to give it as description of what he meant by calling himself “an elder,” ⁵ when he adds, “and a witness of

¹ Acts i. 21.

² John xv. 27.

³ 1 John i. 1. 3.

⁴ Luke i. 12.

⁵ 1 Pet. v. 1.

the sufferings of Christ.” In analogy to the advantage that an elder had in this view, in the times of the apostles, the *αὐτόπται* (those who had seen Christ) were in high esteem in the second century; for this reason, as also for others which I shall mention soon,¹ and the *ἀπαρχαὶ* or first Christian converts. After them the *πρώτη διαδοχή* (the first succession, or those who had seen them that were contemporaries with the apostles) were afterwards had in great veneration. Such were Irenæus and his contemporaries, as mentioned by Eusebius. And the esteem paid to the *αὐτόπται* and the *πρώτη διαδοχή* had not only that foundation in things on which I have just now hinted, but was derived from this first notion of elders, in the view that is now under consideration. And on this account it is, that *seniores* and *presbyteri* sometimes signify men of age, and not of office, even so low down as Irenæus and Tertullian, who stile some so, whom they themselves had seen, who had heard and seen the apostles.² The *αὐτόπται* answer to the original elders, or to those of the one hundred and twenty, who are called “the apostles’ company.” The *ἀπαρχαὶ* are the secondary elders, or the first converts of particular countries and churches; who, having

¹ P. 156.² Iren. adv. Hær. i. c. 2, 3. Tertull. Præscript. l. ii. c. 39. l. v. c. 33. l. iv. c. 45.

the choicest gifts imparted to them, are made or pointed out by the Holy Ghost to be overseers. The πρώτη διαδοχὴ answer to the third or lowest sort of elders, or the most knowing and gravest men, who are fittest to be made overseers and deacons, when *ordo* could no longer be considered, but the mere merit and ordinary qualifications.

But if to this advantage, which the state of things gave them above other Christians, we add the “distinction that the Holy Ghost put upon them, by falling on them,” without the intervention of others, and “filling them” with an uncommon measure of the choicer gifts, there is little room left to doubt, whether these two together, giving them so great an advantage, did not, in consequence, give them an high rank and esteem above others. I do not find that the Holy Ghost Himself fell or was poured out on any but on the one hundred and twenty (that is, the elders), on Saul, on Cornelius and his family, and on the first great harvest of heathen converts at Antioch in Pisidia.¹ And in the case of Cornelius, it is remarked by St. Luke, as a thing of great importance, and which highly deserved their observation, that “the Holy Ghost fell, or was poured out, upon them”² (a phraseology, that, as I observed in

¹ See the First Essay.

² Acts x. 44, 45.

the First Essay, denotes the immediate descent of the Holy Ghost). And St. Peter takes notice of it, as that which was the great justification of his baptizing these first-fruits of the Gentiles, That “when he began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as it did on us (that is, the one hundred and twenty) at the beginning.”¹ And in his speech to the apostles, elders, and brethren, he takes notice of this circumstance again, “that God gave them (that is, Cornelius and his family) the Holy Ghost, as He did unto us, and put no difference between us and them.”²

Besides, where the apostles conferred the gifts of the Holy Ghost on Christians, “they seem to have done it in a lesser degree and proportion:” to one believer one gift, to another, another. But the one hundred and twenty, on whom the Holy Ghost fell, “were filled with it,” as they were said to be when He fell on them the second time. Nor is this expression used of any afterwards, but such as we have reason to think were of these one hundred and twenty (besides Saul, Cornelius and his family, and the Gentiles at Antioch in Pisidia), on whom the Holy Ghost also fell, without the laying on of hands, and filled them with a more plentiful measure of His gifts.³

¹ Acts xi. 15.² Ibid. xv. 8, 9.³ Ibid. ii. 3.⁴ Ibid. iv. 31.⁵ See the First Essay.

From hence we may see how the “eleven apostles, and Matthias, were elders,” though elders were not apostles. St. Peter calls himself “an elder,” saying to those to whom he wrote,¹ “The elders which are among you I exhort, who also am an elder.” So does John.² And I am the more confirmed in this notion of an elder, because, whilst Peter and John style themselves elders, Paul never styles himself so; but, as in contradistinction to the rest of the apostles, speaks of himself “as of one born out of due time;”³ having never seen our Lord till after His ascension. Nay, he is so far from taking the style of an elder, that he seems carefully to avoid it, and only calls himself “the aged,”⁴ where he was giving himself the greatest weight and credit. I think “Paul the aged,” *πρεσβύτης*, the true reading and rendering, and not *πρεσβευτής*, the ambassador; a reading, which is not only entirely without the authority of any copy to support it, but, I think, contrary to the context; where Paul, laying aside all authority as an apostle or an ambassador, applies himself to move Philemon by such considerations as might engage the tender passions of his mind: such as “Paul the prisoner of Jesus Christ” could use to “Philemon, his dearly beloved

¹ 1 Pet. v. 1. ² 2 Ep. 1. 3 Ep. 1. ³ 1 Cor. xv. 8.

⁴ Philem. 9.

and fellow-labourer ;¹ whom, though he might have been bold to enjoin, yet chooses for love's sake to beseech, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also the prisoner of Jesus Christ, for his son Onesimus, begot in his bonds."²

These elders having such endowments and advantages above other Christians, the first ministers of the church were generally of them ; the first deacons were, in all probability, chosen out of them, since they were appointed presently after Christ's ascension, and were then said to be " full of the Holy Ghost ;"³ a phrase, which, as I have observed before, signifies those who had a plentiful effusion of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, by the Holy Ghost's falling on them, without the laying on of hands, and therefore must signify some of the one hundred and twenty, or of the apostles' company, in this text, on whom the Holy Ghost seems to have fallen twice, before this time.⁴ Out of these it is likely the first prophets and teachers were taken, and the great propagators of Christianity, next to the apostles. Thus Philip, one of the seven, went to Samaria, and preached the word. And he was an Evangelist also.⁵ And the

¹ Acts iv. 1.² Ver. 9, 10.³ Ibid. vi. 3.⁴ Ibid. ii. 3. iv. 31.⁵ Ibid. xxi. 8.

church of Jerusalem "sent forth Barnabas" (another of the apostles' company,) and who was also a prophet, and a teacher, before he was an apostle,¹ that he should go as far as Antioch.² Judas and Silas are said to be "chief men among the brethren (*ἄνδρες ἡγούμενοι*)³, probably, as being of the one hundred and twenty. They were also prophets, and "exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them."⁴ It is of some of these one hundred and twenty, perhaps, that St. James speaks, when he orders the "sick to send for the elders of the church, and to pray over them, and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord;" assuring them, that the elders' "prayer of faith should heal them."⁵ This is the most probable, if St. James wrote his epistle out of Palestine, and wrote it to the Jews of the twelve tribes in Judæa, as well as to the Jews of the twelve tribes scattered abroad (as seems to be intimated by chap. i. ver. 18, and by some passages in the fourth and fifth chapters, as Dr. Whitby observes in his preface to this epistle); since then, in all probability, by the "elders of the church," he might point chiefly at the elders of the church of Jerusalem: though to be sure this direction

¹ Acts xiii. 1.

² Ibid. xi. 22.

³ Ibid. xv. 22.

⁴ Ver. 32.

⁵ James v. 14, 15.

referred to elders every where else where they might happen to be, or even to other elders, who, by way of analogy to these first elders, were called elders afterwards, if they had the prayer of faith.

And though, after the churches multiplied, others than these were called elders ; yet they, being such as were generally of the first-fruits of the apostles' conversion in the places where they fixed them, and being persons of the greatest knowledge, experience, and gravity among them, were called elders in some analogy to the one hundred and twenty, who were first, and most properly, called by that name. And I am of opinion, that these first-fruits of the apostles' conversion had every where a greater measure of the more excellent gifts of the Holy Ghost imparted to them, through the laying on of the apostles' hands, than others, in analogy to the still higher communications that came immediately on the apostles and their company, the devout Gentiles at Cæsarea, and the idolatrous Gentiles at Antioch in Pisidia, who were in the most proper and high sense the first-fruits of the Christian church. A readiness to believe the gospel was the highest proof of an honest, worthy, and well-disposed mind. No wonder then, if they should have more choice gifts conferred on them, and in a higher degree, than

and consequently not so well disposed. And if such a proportion and analogy was observed others, who were more backward to receive it, by God between the first-fruits of the whole Christian church and the first-fruits of particular countries and churches, it was but correspondent to other proportions and analogies, that offer themselves to those that read the history of the first propagation of the Christian religion with due care and attention. And I am very much inclined to think, that these first-fruits of countries and churches having more choice gifts, or in a greater degree, than others, was one reason why these first-fruits (*ἀπαρχαί*) were so highly honoured in the apostolic and immediately succeeding times, as well as their earlier conversion : perhaps the greater of the two. It is probable, that these first-fruits generally had the gift of teaching, which, by the rank it is always placed in among the gifts of the Spirit, seems to be the fourth ; namely, after that of apostles, prophets of the highest rank, and evangelists, and before all the rest. It is very probable, on these accounts, that it was some of these first-fruits that Paul and Barnabas declared to be elders in every church in their first apostolic journey. Timothy, being the first-fruits of a second apostolic journey, St. Paul would have to go forth with him ; though perhaps prophecy of some of the prophets con-

curred to induce St. Paul to take him with him as an evangelist. And in this sense perhaps it is that St. Paul says to the elders of the church of Ephesus, that the Holy Ghost had made them overseers or bishops of that flock. Perhaps they were the twelve disciples of John Baptist, who were the first-fruits of Ephesus, and had the gifts that fitted them to be bishops, to feed the church, and take heed to the flock. And Clement says most expressly to this purpose, in his epistle, speaking of the apostles,¹ “They therefore, preaching the word through divers countries and cities, ordained there the first-fruits of such as believed, having made proof and trial of them by the Spirit, to be bishops² (which with Clement is always the same with elders or presbyters, as any one must see if they read the epistle, or, if they can doubt of it, must be fully convinced by the notes of the learned Mr. Burton upon it), and deacons over such as should afterwards believe.” I cannot tell whether Clement does not afterwards intend to tell us that the apostles left a list of such persons behind them as should succeed, when the others

¹ § 42.

² The passage to which Lord Barrington here refers is the following—Κατὰ χώρας καὶ πόλεις κηρύσσοντες καθίστανον τὰς ἀπαρχὰς αὐτῶν, δοκιμάζοντες τῷ πνεύματι, εἰς ἐπισκόπους, καὶ διακόνους τῶν μελλόντων πιστεῦειν. Ad Corinth. i. p. 54.

that they appointed died.¹ The place is diffi-

¹ This was the natural order in which all men would have probably acted, under similar circumstances. The first converts to Christianity would have more experience, and more knowledge of their holy faith than the last. They would be better acquainted with the mighty plan and scheme of the apostles' ministry; and they became the fittest persons to succeed their inspired teachers in their ordinary powers, and offices, as governors of the infant churches. The conclusion to which Lord Barrington has here arrived, as an impartial inquirer after truth, is the very same with that, which is so generally considered to be peculiar only to the partisans of Diocesan Episcopacy. Truth, and unbiassed freedom of inquiry are of no party: their conclusions are as uniform, and as immutable as their principles. The names of the successors to the ordinary powers of the apostles, in the churches of Rome, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria, till the council of Nice, have been handed down to us by ecclesiastical antiquity. A table of these names is given from Eusebius, by Bilson, in his treatise on the perpetual government of Christ's Church, (4to, 1610, p. 260,) by that famous, most eloquent and learned ornament of his age, Jeremy Taylor, and by many who have written on this subject. Iræneus and Tertullian, (who proudly allude to the episcopal succession in their replies to the heretics of their age,) Jerome, Clemens, and indeed all the early writers who have in any way touched only upon the subject, have assigned to the first governors of the various primitive churches the same powers, which episcopalians still grant to their diocesan Bishops, in America, Scotland and England. The supremacy of one Pontiff, and the strange limitations which were invented at that sad period of ecclesiastical controversy, and civil dissension, which followed the emancipation of truth from the fetters of popery, were alike

cult and uncertain. The words are, καὶ μεταξὺ

unknown in the first centuries of Christianity. This is not the place, neither is this the time, to enter upon the discussion of the great question of the scriptural form of the government of the churches of Christ. I trust it will please God, that another opportunity for so doing will be afforded.

There are however two principal objections to diocesan episcopacy, upon which I would briefly remark ; the first is, that the names of bishop, priest, elder, &c. &c., were common to those same individuals, to whom the advocates of this mode of policy assign episcopal power ; the other is, the argument ad verecundiam, that Luther, Calvin, Beza, Melancthon, and other of the principal reformers, when they rejected popery, rejected episcopacy also, as one of the corruptions of Christianity.

With respect to the former of these objections I would observe, that our Lord assumed the same names by which His servants the apostles were distinguished, while the history of His life demonstrates His superiority. The testimony both of Scripture and antiquity proves the superiority of the apostles, and of their episcopal successors, though the same appellations might have been at first, undoubtedly, common to all. Their offices were distinct, their names were common. Christ is termed our Apostle, Heb. iii. 1 ; our Prophet, Deut. xviii. 15, Acts iii. 22 ; Bishop, 1 Peter ii. 25 ; Doctor or Teacher, Matt. xxiii. 10 ; Deacon or Minister, Rom. xv. 8. Yet He governed the church, with powers underived from the people, and He consigned to His apostles the authority to ordain, and to rule. The civil governments of the world may obtain their powers by conventional agreements, actual, implied, or understood ; the ecclesiastical governments of the societies of Christians which are bound together by the rite of baptism, and which are elected

ἐπινομήν δεδώκασιν.¹ I would refer my reader to

by this rite from among the nations of the earth, derive their commission from a higher source. Among Christians, as among the Jews of old, “the lips of the priest,” or teacher, or prophet, must keep knowledge; and the people must learn the law from his mouth. When the apostles were called to their great account, they left the world, filled with their converts, associated, independently of each other, in their several countries, cities, and districts, under their independent episcopal governors and teachers. Prosperity corrupted them. The usurpations of Rome devoured them; and the reaction at the Reformation confounded all rule and all government, in the general anxiety to avoid Popery. The consequences, as well as the existence, of religious error, is a curse to mankind.

The second opinion, that the continental reformers were opposed from principle to diocesan Episcopacy, is entirely erroneous. Luther declared that every city ought to have its own bishop by divine right, as St. Paul taught in his Epistle to Titus.*—Calvin† adopted presbyterianism as a substitute or an expedient; and in his usual stern and peremptory manner, asserts, in his epistle to Sadolet, that those men, whoever they may be, are worthy of every anathema, who

¹ § 44.

* Probo quamlibet civitatem habere debere episcopum proprium jure divino, quod ex Paulo ad Titum, ostendo, dicente, &c. &c. Luther, tom. i. fol. 309.

† Verum talem nobis si contribuant Hierarchiam in qua emineant Episcopi, ut Christo subesse non recusent, ut ab illo tanquam ab unico capite pendeant, et ad ipsum referantur, in qua si fraternam charitatem inter se celant, et non alio modo quam ejus veritate colligati, tum vero nullo non anathemate dignos fatemur si qui erunt, qui eam non reverenter, et summa cum obedientia observent.—Calvin, tom. vii. ad Sadoletum; et de necessitate reformandæ ecclesiæ.

Mr. Burton's notes upon it. However, this sense is one that some of the critics give it,

do not reverently and willingly submit to the government of those Bishops, who are united by the bond of truth alone, and submit to Christ as the only Head of the church. Beza* congratulated the Church of England in his letters to Saravia and to Archbishop Grindal, on the restoration of its protestant Episcopacy. He implored the unquiet clergy, who returned from the continent after the Marian persecution, to submit to its government, and wished it might be perpetuated to the nation.

Melancthon, when he saw the confusion, which followed the first attempts at the Reformation in Germany, united in the general wish of the protestant churches of Germany to preserve the authority of bishops. "Would to God," he exclaimed, "that I could restore the government of bishops! for I see what a church we shall have, the ecclesiastical polity being dissolved."† Melancthon‡ was invited by our reformers to assist in the revisal of the liturgy. He never opposed Episcopacy. Casaubon,§ Zanchius, Spanheim,

* Quod si nunc Anglicanæ ecclesiæ instauratæ, suorum episcoporum et archiepiscoporum autoritate suffultæ perstant, quemadmodum hoc illi nostra memoria contigit, ut ejus ordinis homines, non tantum insignes Dei martyres, sed etiam præstantissimos doctores et pastores habuerit, fruatur sane ista singulari Dei beneficentia, quæ utinam sit illi perpetua.—Beza resp. ad Sarav. de divers. minist. grad. cap. 18. v. 3.

Ut omnibus præsulibus ex animo obsequantur. Majori pœna digni, qui auctoritatem tuam aspernabantur. Ad Grindal Epist. 12, et 23.

† See Archbishop Laurence's notes to his Bampton Lecture.

‡ Utinam possem administrationem restituere episcoporum. Video enim qualem simus habituri ecclesiam dissoluta politia ecclesiastica. Hist. Conf. Aug. p. 365.* Teste Saravia, de minist. grad. cap. 16.

§ The above references, and others to the works of these divines are to be found in Bishop Morton's work, and in the Oxford declaration—en-

and which it may well bear. Usher translates it, “ordinem præscriptum:” and Hammond, “seriem successionis, catalogum.” The place being difficult, I will transcribe the whole passage, and leave the construction to the reader :
Καὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι ἡμῶν ἔγνωσαν διὰ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅτι ἕρις ἔσται ἐπὶ τοῦ ὀνόματος τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς· διὰ ταύτην οὖν τὴν αἰτίαν, πρόγνωσιν εἰληφότες τελείαν, κατέστησαν τοὺς προειρημένους· καὶ μεταξὺ ἐπινομήν δεδώκασιν, ὅπως ἂν κοιμηθῶσιν, διαδέξωνται ἕτεροι δεδοκιμασμένοι ἄνδρες τὴν λειτουργίαν αὐτῶν.’ Mr. Dodwell says, that the usage

Diodati, and many others of the most eminent and learned theologians of that most learned age, rejoiced in the re-establishment of the Episcopacy of England. It was reserved for the next generation, when they saw the firm attachment of the bishops of England to their sovereign, in the unfortunate days of a weak king, a falling monarchy, and unsettled principles of legislation, to attack the bishops and their order. It was reserved for a still later age for Anderson to talk of the divine right of Presbyterianism, and Campbell to defend the doctrine.

¹ The difficulty which Lord Barrington finds in this passage lies in the word ἐπινομήν, which Bishop Morton* translates, a description of officers and ministers, in their course.

titled, “Confessions and Proofs of Protestant Divines concerning Episcopacy.”—Printed by H. Hall, 1644.

* See Bishop Morton’s work, “The Episcopacy of the Church of England, &c.” 1670, p. 40, 41.—This was the Bishop of Durham in the time of the Commonwealth, who replied to the leader of a party of Parliamentary soldiers, enquiring who he was; “I am that old man, the Bishop of Durham, in spite of all your votes.”—See Walker’s “Sufferings of the Clergy.”

of ordaining the first-fruits or earliest converts to the ministry continued to the time of Hadrian; after which, he adds, “not *ordo*, not the time of persons being converts, but the merit was considered.”¹

Where the elders of the first sort failed, no doubt but these were fixed, and “presided in the assemblies of Christians,” directing and managing the public worship, where there were extraordinary gifts of the Spirit (as the first sort of elders had done before) as well as afterwards, when those gifts ceased. And these were called προῖστάμενοι ἐν Κυρίῳ,² and the οἱ καλῶς

Vedelius, professor of divinity at Geneva, in the reign of Elizabeth, renders the word ἐπινομήν, “description,” and concludes that it is no other than the census, in Tertullian: from which it appears, he observes, to have been a custom in the apostolical churches to write a roll of the order of bishops, in their successions, to bring them from their originals, as Polycarp was from John the apostle in the church at Smyrna, and Clemens in the church of Rome, from St. Peter and others, whom the apostles constituted bishops. Dr. Barrow* translates the passage—

“The apostles’ having constituted the foresaid (bishops and deacons), they withal gave them further charge, that if they should die, other approved men, successively, should receive their office.”

¹ Dodw. Diss. on Iren. Diss. II. § 17.

² 1 Thess. v. 12.

* Barrow’s “Treatise on the Pope’s Supremacy,” p. 79, fol. edition, published by Archbishop Tillotson, 1683.

προεστῶτες πρεσβύτεροι, “the elders that rule (or preside) well:” especially, if they had the gift of the Spirit, that qualified them for ruling (or presiding), as the elders in the apostles’ time seem to have had.¹ St. Paul adds, that “the elders that rule (or preside) well, should be counted worthy of double honour (or stipend), especially they who labour in the word and doctrine:” which seems to imply, that all elders ruled, or presided; though all did not rule (or preside) or teach well. So likewise St. Peter bids the elders “feed (that is, teach) the flock, taking the oversight thereof (ruling, or presiding), not by constraint (as a thing of course, and as what was expected from their standing in years, or Christianity), not for filthy lucre, (or the stipend that attended,) but of a ready mind.” This distinction of teaching and ruling elders seems to have lasted down to the days of Cyprian, where one may trace it plainly in these words of his, “Cum presbyteris doctoribus doctorem audientium constituimus.”² If there had not been in his time two sorts of elders, one sort of which was teaching elders, he would never have added “doctoribus” to “presbyteris.” This is also very agreeable to what Tertullian says afterwards, describing the worship of the Christians: “Coimus in cœtum (id est, ecclesiam)

¹ See the First Essay.

² Ep. xxix.

ut ad Deum, quasi manu facta precationibus orantes——ibidem etiam exhortationes, castigationes, et censuræ divinæ——præsident probati quique seniores.”¹ And these he calls elsewhere “præsidentes :”² “Eucharistice sacramentum, et tempore victus, et omnibus mandatum est a Domino, etiam antelucanis cœtibus : nec ab aliorum manu quam præsidentium sumimus.”³

And perhaps these are “the elders that St. Paul left Titus in Crete to ordain.” St. Paul directs Titus⁴ to ordain such elders in every city “as have faithful children, not accused of riot or cruelty ;” or, as he says to Timothy of a bishop (who was to be an elder), “one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with gravity ;”⁵ which shews plainly that the elders were men somewhat advanced in years, who had children of such an age as to be capable of being orderly or riotous. This is the more probable, because Timothy not being an elder in any of these senses, St. Paul seems to excuse his laying his hands on him, to impart gifts for the office of an evangelist, from prophecy that directed it ;⁶ and also to enjoin so particularly that “no man should despise

¹ Apol. c. 39.

² Tert. de Cor. Mil.

³ Brokesby, vol. i. p. 122.

⁴ Chap. i. 6.

⁵ 1 Tim. iii. 4.

⁶ Ver. 14.

his youth ;”¹ and to caution the Corinthians against it ;² though ordinarily a novice in Christianity, or one newly converted to Christianity, was not even to be appointed a bishop, and therefore one would imagine much less an evangelist, which was an higher office in the church.³ And this perhaps too is the reason why St. Paul insists so much on Timothy’s “rebuking and reprovng with gentleness, gravity, authority, and (particularly with) purity.” Timothy was a very young man, and but just converted, when St. Paul would have him go forth with him as an evangelist,⁴ and presently after made use of him in converting the Thessalonians ;⁵ if he did not make use of him in that work immediately in Galatia, Phrygia, Mysia, and the other cities of Macedonia, before he came to Thessalonica, as it is highly probable he did. And for this reason it is that, after St. Paul directs Timothy, in the place I quoted before,⁶ “not to rebuke an elder, but to intreat him as a father; the younger men as brethren; the elder women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters,” that he adds, “with all purity :” because Timothy, being a young man, was to take particular care “to flee youthful lusts.”⁷

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 12. ² 1 Cor. xvi. 11. ³ Chap. iii. 6.

⁴ Acts xvi. 3. ⁵ Ibid. xvii. 1. 1 Thess. i. 1.

⁶ 1 Tim. v. 1. ⁷ 2 Tim. i. 22.

PART III.—ON THE BRETHREN.

SECTION I.—*All believers, who were not apostles or elders, were called brethren.*

IF this be the true description of elders and apostles, it will naturally follow who were “the brethren:” all that believed, who were not elders or apostles; or, if you please, all that believed, who had not seen Christ while He was upon earth, and had not the Holy Ghost also poured out upon them; that is, communicated without the laying on of hands. Thus those five hundred are called “brethren” by St. Paul,¹ “of whom Christ had been seen at once, after He was risen from the dead, the greater part of whom are fallen asleep;” the Holy Ghost not having fallen upon them: as to be sure all those also must, who were converted to Christianity after Christ’s death and resurrection, though the Holy Ghost fell down on them; which was the case of Saul, of Cornelius and his family, and of the great number

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 6.

of idolatrous Gentiles that were first converted to Christianity at Antioch in Pisidia.¹ All these, who had not seen Christ, and had not also had the Holy Ghost immediately fallen down upon them, were first called “believers,” being distinguished from the other Jews by nothing but believing in Christ;² and then “disciples;”³ and, when they increased to a multitude, “brethren.”⁴ After this, the proselytes of the gate in the church of Antioch, who at first called themselves “Christians,”⁵ but had at last the other names allowed them, and particularly that of “brethren,” as I shall observe more fully in the Fourth Essay. But whatever new name these or any of the Jewish believers might take or receive, yet it was without losing their former appellations; for though they were generally and for the most part called “brethren,” yet are they called “believers” and “disciples” afterwards on many occasions,⁶ and all or some of them “Christians” once.⁷

And as apostles, elders, and brethren, comprehended the whole church of Jerusalem, all

¹ See the First Essay. ² Acts v. 32.

³ Acts ii. 7. vi. 1. ix. 1. x. 19. 25, 26. xiv. 20.

⁴ Ibid. vi. 3. ix. 30. xii. 17. xv. 1. 23. 36. 40. xvii. 6. 10. 14. xviii. 18. 27. ⁵ Ibid. xi. 24.

⁶ Ibid. x. 19. 25, 26. xiv. 20. xx. 1. 7. xxi. 4. 16.

⁷ 1 Pet. iv. 16.

that were not apostles or elders in the sense I have explained them came under the appellation of "brethren;" whatever acquaintance they might have had with our Saviour, or whatever gifts were conferred on them by the immediate descent of the Holy Ghost, if both these did not concur, they were still no more than brethren. Nor did the ministry they might perform in the church take them out of the rank of brethren, and give them the rank of an elder, whatever the ministry was, whether it was of prophet, evangelist, teacher, bishop, or government. The division of the church into apostles, elders, and brethren, was a division that necessarily flowed from the nature of things; and other divisions or distinctions were not so much regarded, and could be considered the less, because, I suppose, it may be made more than probable, that there was not one member in the church of Jerusalem who had not some gift of the Spirit, which he publicly exercised for the service of that church, as occasion offered.

In this account of apostles, elders, and brethren, it is visible, how very small a proportion in number the two first bear to the last. So that it is no wonder, if, towards the later times of the apostles, "brethren" came to signify the same thing with "believers," whether they were apostles, elders, or brethren strictly so

called. Whence the apostle directs, "Let brotherly love continue."¹ And Peter says to the elders, as well as the rest, that they should be "loving to the brethren,"² so is the reading in the margin; and that they should "love the brotherhood."³ And Peter addresses himself to them all thus, "Wherefore, brethren."⁴

SECTION II.—*On the message from the church at Antioch to the church at Jerusalem, and the discussion in the Apostolic Council.*

It was to these apostles, elders, and brethren, at Jerusalem, that the message was sent from the church of Antioch, on "certain false brethren coming thither," with a pretended authority from these apostles, elders, and brethren, at Jerusalem, saying, "that they must be circumcised."⁵

Whereupon Paul and Barnabas having had much disputation with them, without silencing them; or, perhaps, entirely satisfying the church of Antioch; it was agreed and determined (for which also there was a revelation)⁶ to send up Paul, Barnabas, and others, to the church of Jerusalem about this question: not to deter-

¹ Heb. xiii. 1. ² 1 Pet. iii. 8. ³ Ibid. ii. 17.

⁴ 2 Pet. i. 10. ⁵ Acts xv. 24. ⁶ Gal. ii. 21. Acts xv. 2.

mine it by their authority, as apostles; for then Paul and Barnabas might have done it, who were acknowledged and owned as apostles in that church; but first to know, whether these persons had the authority from the apostles, elders, and brethren at Jerusalem, which they pretended. This appears from the answer, "Forasmuch as we have heard that certain men which went from us, have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law, to whom we gave no such commandment."¹ For the Holy Ghost having given a full decision against this opinion, in the case of Cornelius, on whom the Holy Ghost fell in uncircumcision, I suppose these false brethren found there was no way for them to avoid that decision, and get credit at Antioch, for the imposing circumcision, but by pretending an authority from the apostles, elders, and brethren, at Jerusalem; as if a new revelation made to these apostles, and received by that church, had given a new turn to this matter. That there were many who pretended to revelations in the apostolic times, is evident from several passages in the epistles.² Perhaps these very men are the pretenders to revelation which St. John refers to,³

¹ Acts xv. 24.

² Particularly, 1 Thess. v. 20, 21. 1 Tim. iv. 1. 2 Pet. ii. 1. 1 John iv. 1—4. 6.

³ 1 John ii. 19.

by which pretences they might have deceived the faithful, “ if they had not an unction from the Holy One, and had not known all things.”¹

And I believe these men’s alleging that this was a new revelation made to the apostles, and pretending to bring it from the church at Jerusalem, was, together with the revelation that was actually made at Antioch, to go up to Jerusalem, the chief, if not the only reason of the church of Antioch’s sending to the church of Jerusalem ; it being necessary for the peace and safety of the church of Antioch, to know the truth of this fact ; namely, whether the church of Jerusalem was from some new revelation come to think that the devout Gentiles converted to Christianity were to be circumcised ; and whether they had sent these men with such a message to the church of Antioch. Accordingly the apostles, elders, and brethren at Jerusalem, meet on this occasion. When they were met, some of the same leaven in the church of Jerusalem with those pretended messengers rise up to support the same side of the question. Whereupon a debate ensues ; and after much disputation, and James’s summing up the debate, and forming the question, they send an answer, to let them know that they did not send these messengers ; and that, instead of

¹ 1 John ii. 20.

having had any new revelation, they adhered to the decision which the Holy Ghost had made in the case of Cornelius. This answer they send, but by messengers of their own, to explain and enforce it; and who being prophets were very capable of exhorting those to whom they were sent, to comply with it, and adhere to it. If the church of Antioch had sent for an authoritative decision, they would have sent to one apostle: the inspiration of one being as authoritative as of a thousand. Where do we read of sending to more than one prophet of the Lord, upon any matter, under the Old Testament? Indeed, we read of a great number of false prophets being assembled, to give some countenance to a lie.¹ But, if the church at Antioch had wanted an authoritative determination never so much, they would certainly never have sent to any more than the twelve apostles. Whereas they sent to the apostles, elders, and brethren. Indeed, “the apostles and elders” are the only persons mentioned as sent to.² But it is plain it was understood to be to the brethren too; from the brethren, or the “whole multitude,” meeting together, and from the answer being drawn up in their name. It was usual to attribute that to the apostles, who presided in all debates and trans-

¹ 1 Kings xxii. 6. 22.

² Ver. 2.

actions in the church, where they were present, that was done by the whole assembly: as a sheriff or mayor is said to return members to Parliament, he being the officer of the assembly, though others return, or join in the return, with him. The instance, Acts vi., is full to this purpose. And St. Luke probably mentions the elders here, as sent to as well as the apostles, because they used to preside in the absence of the apostles.

And if we could suppose that an authoritative answer was to have been sent from the whole church; yet we cannot suppose they would have debated what that answer should be: but that one of them, under inspiration, as the mouth of the rest, would have delivered the mind and will of God; saying, "Thus saith the Lord:" or, "Thus said the Lord:"¹ or, "This is the mind of Christ:" "These things saith He that is holy and true; or the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God:"² or, "We have the mind of Christ:"³ or, "Thus saith the Spirit:"⁴ or, some of the other forms of speech, used by the apostles on other like occasions. Whereas their letter runs thus: "That it seemed good (that is, reasonable) unto them (they do not say,

¹ Acts xx. 35.² Rev. ii. 14.³ 1 Cor. ii. 16.⁴ 1 Tim. iv. 1.

that it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to them, as they do afterwards to a particular purpose, and for a different reason), being assembled (that is, debating) with one accord," (that is, being unanimously of opinion from the debate). And to make it plain that they designed no authoritative determination, James declares against any such; or against making any new law, or order. For his sentence was, "not to trouble the Gentiles,"¹ (that is, not to lay any new injunction on them, as those had gone about to do, who had gone from them to the church of Antioch,) "troubling them,"² ἀλλὰ ἐπιστεῖλαι αὐτοῖς, "but to write to them (so we render it; it had, perhaps, been better to have rendered it, "to write a letter to them"), that it seemed good to the Holy Ghost (in the case of Cornelius, by falling immediately on him, and those that were with him), and (it therefore did) to them (the words "for it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us," naturally carry in them an inference which the assembly made from something the Holy Ghost had done), to lay no greater burthen upon them, than those necessary things;" which they themselves, therefore, must agree, had been laid on them before: "That ye abstain, &c. From which things if ye keep yourselves" (διατηροῦν-

¹ Acts xv. 19.² Ver. 24.

τες, in the present tense, shewing it, at that time, to be a law), as you yourselves know you are already obliged to do, “ye shall do well. Fare ye well.” This is not the style of a canon. That must have been, as St. Paul says in another case: “And if any man comply not with this our commandment, let him be anathema, Maranatha:”¹ or, “If any one obey not our word by this epistle, note him, and have no company with him.”²

This was the letter they wrote. And this they send by chosen messengers, who were to speak to them more fully by word of mouth. Indeed, the words our translators have used concerning this letter seem very strong; ³ “and as they (Paul and Barnabas) went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.” But τὰ δόγματα τὰ κεκριμένα, which we translate “the decrees ordained,” will bear a version that carries much less of an air of power and authority along with it; and may be rendered “the opinions which were agreed by,” or, “the unanimous judgment of, the apostles and elders at Jerusalem.” Or it may be rather, “the adjudged laws by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem.” The sense and meaning of which

¹ 1 Cor. xvi. 22.² 2 Thess v. 14.³ Acts xvi. 4.

is, “ the judgment or opinion of the apostles and elders about these laws ; ” namely, of Moses, relating to the proselytes of the gate. This rendering would be more suitable to a letter, or epistle, that conveyed this decree ; and to their sending “ Judas and Silas ” (with Paul and Barnabas) to enforce it ; who were “ to tell them the same things more fully by mouth ; ” and being “ prophets to exhort them ” to comply with this advice. Whereas there had been no need to have sent a letter and messengers, if it had been a decree in the strict and proper sense of the word. But our translators seem to have had the idea of a council framing a canon always before their eyes, whilst they translated these two chapters ; and therefore make James say,¹ “ Wherefore my sentence is ; ” supposing him, as President of this council, to pronounce the decree. Whereas he does but sum up the debate in his speech, adding proper arguments of his own ; and then adds, *διὸ ἐγὼ κρίνω*, which might have been better rendered, “ Wherefore my opinion is.”

So that this decree was an unanimous answer to an enquiry about a matter of fact from the church of Antioch ; and was at the same time an unanimous advice, formed upon a debate, carrying its own reasons and evidence along

¹ Acts xv. 10.

with it, to all those to whom the letter was addressed ; and to be more fully explained and evinced by the messengers who were sent with it. And, indeed, as we have no instance of any absolute decree, or injunction, in the New Testament, from any apostle or apostles, but from the illumination they had received, or from immediate revelation, and speaking from one or the other as the ancient prophets do, from the Lord, and in His name ; and as it would be otherwise setting them up as kings in Christ's kingdom, or lords, having dominion over our faith, instead of His servants of the churches : so it must have been peculiarly improper in that state of things, from the gifts of the Spirit that abounded so much in those churches where the decrees were sent. For they were churches where St. Paul and Barnabas had been, and had, no doubt, imparted the Holy Ghost. So that these decrees cannot be supposed to be any more than the advice of spiritual men, appealing to those who were spiritual, and desiring them to judge of what they said, as St. Paul does on another occasion.¹ If this was the case, then I am sure, those who would have a power of making canons, or decrees (that shall bind Christians), inherent in the church, must have some other authority for

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 37.

it than this decree. For if spiritual men here do no more than advise spiritual men about a known duty, from the evidence brought for it; and appeal back to their judgment upon that evidence; rational men (as the pretensions of Protestants go no higher) can do no more with rational men, by virtue of this precedent. Nay, and as far as this goes, when advice is to be given, it must not be by the clergy in exclusion of, or in an over-proportion to, the laity; but by the laity in a great over-proportion to the clergy. But this will appear much clearer, if the reader will give himself the trouble to peruse the Fourth Essay; where the matter of this decree will be considered, and to whom it was addressed.

ESSAY III.

ON THE TIME WHEN PAUL AND BARNABAS
BECAME, AND WERE KNOWN TO BE, APOS-
TLES.

SECTION I.—*On the time of the first personal appearance of Christ to St. Paul.—Whether He was seen by St. Paul at his conversion.*

HAVING considered the history of St. Paul with some care and attention, and particularly in relation to the order of time and place ; it appears very plainly to me, from taking several parts of it together, that he did not appear to be an apostle to any part of the Christian church, till he was declared to be separated to that office in the church of Antioch ; ¹ and that he did not even commence an apostle, or receive his commission from Christ as such, till a very little before he came thither ; namely, at Jerusalem, the second time of his being there, after his conversion to the faith of Christ, about the latter end of the year 43. ²

¹ Acts xiii. 12.

² The subject of this Essay has been amply discussed in

Before I enter upon the proof of this point which has never been, as far as I know, asserted before,¹ it will be necessary for me to repeat what I said in my former Essay I meant by an "apostle;" that so every one may judge of the strength of the proof I offer, to support this assertion. By "an apostle," then, I mean a chief and primary minister of the kingdom of Christ,

the notes to the "Arrangement of the New Testament." The Essay itself is abridged, vol. ii. p. 155. While I have adopted Lord Barrington's theory, that St. Paul became an apostle, by divine appointment, after he had seen his vision in the temple ("Arrangement of the New Testament," chap. x. sec. 13. vol. ii. p. 155), I have not been convinced by his reasoning in favour of the opinion that St. Paul did not see our Lord for the first time, at his conversion, but at his trance in the temple. I have been more satisfied with the arguments of Witsius, Doddridge, and Macknight. The reasoning also which I have submitted to the approbation of the student ("Arrangement of the New Testament," vol. ii. p. 89) has not appeared less convincing, than when it first occurred.

¹ Lord Barrington had not therefore seen the passage in Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity,* in which a similar opinion was given to the world, with the additional observation, that Barnabas and Saul were, probably, now set apart for their apostleship, to supply the vacancies in their original number, one having been killed by Herod, the other having been made the stationary bishop of Jerusalem. Dr. Hales has adopted this opinion.

* Book vii. sec. 4. p. 337. "Hales' Anal. of Chronology," vol. ii. part 2. p. 1083, Ap. "Arrangement of the New Testament," vol. ii. p. 160.

commissioned and commanded by God to testify the resurrection of Christ, and the other great facts of Christianity, as far as he was personally acquainted with them, on being an eye and ear witness of them, and particularly of Christ's resurrection from the dead; and to publish the doctrines and mysteries of the gospel: endued with superior courage and utterance, in the times of the greatest danger, and before the greatest audience, in order to testify the resurrection of Christ, and the other facts of Christianity, and publish His gospel, the better; and with extraordinary and uncommon powers of curing diseases, and inflicting grievous distempers, and death, on obstinate offenders, and imparting the Holy Ghost; for the confirmation of the truth of what He taught and testified.¹ I refer my reader to the Second Essay for the proof of this description.

I shall therefore proceed directly to St. Paul's story. As much of it as concerns this matter seems to be this:

As he went to Damascus, a Gentile city, in the year 35, "with letters from the high-priests to the synagogues there, to send any of the disciples of the Lord, that should be in those parts, bound to Jerusalem;" he sees, "about

¹ For the more ample discussion of the meaning of the word apostle, see "Arrangement of the New Testament," vol. ii. p. 107—110.

noon," near that city, "a great light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about him." ¹ This light seems to have been a large and bright ray of the glory of Christ darted from heaven upon him, and those that were with him; or the bright cloud, which appeared on many occasions under the Old and New Testament; and which in particular shone round about the shepherds at our Saviour's birth, ² overshadowed Peter, James, and John, at Christ's transfiguration; ³ which St. Peter calls "the excellent glory," ⁴ and which took Christ out of the apostles' sight at His ascension. ⁵ But it does not seem to have been the glory that surrounded our Saviour's person, then standing near Saul, as has been generally thought: since it is expressly said to have been a "light from heaven," in all the three places that I have just now quoted, and the only places where St. Luke mentions this transaction. Nor is this light described so much like that which St. Matthew mentions at Christ's transfiguration, "when His face is said to shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light;" but rather like the bright cloud that is then mentioned to have overshadowed the three apostles, from which a voice issued; which was distinct

¹ Acts ix. 1, 2, 3. xxii. 6. xxvi. 13.

² Luke i. 9.

³ Matt. xvii. 5.

⁴ 2 Pet. i. 17.

⁵ Acts i. 9.

from the brightness of our Saviour's face and garment : as appears yet more plainly in Luke.¹ For this glory, that shone in the road to Damascus, is spoken of ; not as surrounding Christ, but as a light from heaven surrounding Paul and his companions.² From whence (that is, from the cloud) in all probability also the voice came, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" as the voice likewise did at Christ's transfiguration, and perhaps at His baptism.³

And it is the less probable that Christ personally appeared at that time, since Saul did not know Him ; which most probably he would have done, if Christ had personally appeared to him, from the marks of crucifixion, which it is most likely His body carried about it : since He did not only appear with them to His disciples after His resurrection ;⁴ but to St. John, after His ascension. For St. John says, he saw Him, "as the Lamb slain ;"⁵ that is, as Christ slain ; who went under the character of a lamb, and whom, the same apostle tells us in his gospel, John Baptist introduced to the world, by saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world."⁶ Now it is plain, Saul did not know Christ, nor whose voice it was that spake to him ; since he asks, "Lord, who

¹ Chap. ix. 28—36.

² Acts ix. 3. xxii. 6. xxvi. 13.

³ Matt. iii. 17.

⁴ John xx. 25. 27.

⁵ Revel. v. 6.

⁶ John i. 29.

art thou?"¹ And even that question he seems to ask, because he was sensible, as a learned Jew, well acquainted with the notion of the Shechinah, or these bright and luminous appearances, that this must be some divine manifestation, though he knew not precisely what manifestation it was.²

But, after all this, if we can suppose that Christ made any personal appearance at that

¹ Acts ix. 5.

² Is it not more probable that this exclamation implies, that the form of the manifested God of Christianity was for a moment visible when the light of the Shechinah broke forth from Heaven? He might have mistaken the refulgence for some unnatural phenomenon; but, as a learned Jew, he could not be ignorant, that if a form appeared, it must have been the God of his fathers. (See the note in loc. in the "Arrangement of the New Testament.") Might not the account of St. Paul's conversion be thus paraphrased?

V. 3. As he journeyed, there suddenly appeared to him the same glory of the Shechinah, which had sometimes been made visible to the patriarchs, surrounding the form of a man.

4. Saul beholding this sight, fell to the ground, and the supernatural voice (which the Jews called the Bath-col) was heard to address him—Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

5. Saul, trembling, and overpowered, exclaimed, God of my fathers, hast thou again assumed a human form, to appear to me? for what purpose am I thus honoured?—And the manifested Form replied, From the glory of the Shechinah: I am Jesus the Nazarene, the God of thy fathers, whom thou persecutest.

time, yet it is not likely that Saul saw Him ; since Luke never says that Saul did (but only the light from Heaven), either where Luke tells the story himself,¹ or where he introduces Paul as telling it :² when yet, in all those places, it is particularly related, that “ Saul heard the Lord ; ”³ who, as it is most likely, as I observed before, spoke to him from the cloud, or heavenly glory. And so likewise Luke says,⁴ that the “ men who were with him stood speechless, hearing a voice ” (either not so distinctly as to understand it, or else not understanding the Hebrew language, in which it was spoken ;⁵ in which sense St. Paul says⁶ they heard not the voice, and in which sense ἀκούει is taken,⁷ but an indistinct and confused sound, or in a language they did not understand) ; but “ seeing no man, though they saw the light or the glory ; ”⁸ a plain proof that there was no person there to be seen ; which seems to me to be the very reason why St. Luke says,⁹ Paul’s companions, though they heard a voice, “ saw no man.”¹⁰

And it is yet the less likely that Saul saw Christ ; since, in all those places where this story

¹ Acts ix.

² Ibid. xxii. or xxvi.

³ Ibid. ix. 4. xxii. 7. xxvi. 14. ⁴ Ibid. ix. 7.

⁵ Ibid. xxvi. 14. ⁶ Ibid. xxii. 9. ⁷ See 1 Cor. xiv. 2.

⁸ Acts xxii. 9. ⁹ Ibid. ix. 7.

¹⁰ For other solutions of this difficulty, see “ Arrangement of the New Testament,” vol. ii. p. 92.

is told, Saul seems, the very moment he saw the light, to have been struck blind by it, and in that instant to have fallen to the ground,¹ and to have continued blind for three days.²

And though Ananias says, that it was “the Lord Jesus that appeared to him in the way;” and though Barnabas says, that Saul “had seen the Lord in the way,”³ yet that is not to be understood of Christ’s person, but of His glory; which is the only thing that Saul is very particularly mentioned to have seen, and under the description of a bright light. Thus “the nobles saw God the God of Israel, in the mount, seeing His glory;”⁴ though “they saw no manner of similitude there.”⁵ So that, on the whole, Saul cannot be supposed to have seen the Lord. And yet, seeing the Lord was essential to an apostle, in the nature of his office; he being to testify, as an eye and ear witness, that Christ was risen.⁶ And agreeable thereto St. Paul says,⁷ “Am not I an apostle? have not I seen the Lord?” “And last of all (he says), He (that is, Christ) was seen of me, as of one born out of due time.”⁸

¹ Acts xxii. 11.

² Ibid. viii. 9.

³ Ibid. ix. 17. 27.

⁴ Exod. xxiv. 10. 12.

⁵ Deut. ii. 12.

⁶ See the Second Essay.

⁷ 1 Cor. ix. 1.

⁸ Chap. xv. 8, 9.

SECTION II.—*Whether St. Paul was made an Apostle by Ananias.*

And though Saul heard the Lord, yet the Lord revealed nothing to him at that time ; but “ that he should go to Damascus ; where it should be told him what he should do ;”¹ or, as he himself is reported to have related it,² “ where it shall be told thee of all things which shall be appointed for thee to do ;” that is, of as much as was necessary for him to hear from Ananias at that time. For what Ananias said to him appears to be very short and general,³ and carries nothing in it that can be supposed to constitute him an apostle. It was indeed revealed to Ananias, that “ Saul should bear Christ’s name to the Gentiles,” that is, some time or other ; and he tells Saul, that God had chosen him, in order to his receiving great visions and discoveries of God’s will,⁴ and particularly that “ he should see that Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth.” And if Ananias related to him, that Christ had said, that he (Saul) “ should bear Christ’s name to the Gentiles” (which St. Luke does not say that Ananias did), yet this could not make him an apostle : nor indeed any thing else (as his case was cir-

¹ Acts ix. 6. ² Ibid. xxii. 10. ³ Ibid. ix. 17. xxii. 14, 15, 16.

⁴ Ibid. xxii. 14.

cumstanced), but a revelation of the gospel he was to preach, and a mission of Him to preach it. Now we do not find that Ananias revealed any doctrine to him, much less the gospel which he was to preach to the Gentiles : nay, we are sure Ananias did not reveal it to him ; since he declares, he received it not of man, nor from any of the apostles ; much less from Ananias, a disciple : but by the (immediate) “revelation of Jesus Christ :”¹ and declares,² that “he was not an apostle of men ;” not sent by Peter, or any of the apostles ; as Timothy, Titus, and others were by him ; who were “apostles” or messengers of him and the churches (ἀπόστολον ἐκκλησιῶν),³ and (ἀπόστολος ὑμῶν) :⁴ nor “by man” (διὰ) ; not by the ministry of any man, as Matthias was ; nor consequently by the ministry of Ananias.

Nay farther, if he had been made an apostle by Ananias, he had been inferior to Matthias ; who, though he was in some sense constituted an apostle by men, yet had eleven apostles amongst those who, in some sort, constituted him one : whereas, if St. Paul had been made an apostle by Ananias, he had been made an apostle by one that was no more than a disciple.⁵ But St. Paul, as he adds,⁶ was made an apostle

¹ Gal. xi. 12. 17.² Ibid. i. 1.³ 2 Cor. viii. 23.⁴ Philip. ii. 25.⁵ Acts ix. 10.⁶ Gal. xi. 12.

“by Jesus Christ,” (that is,) immediately, or personally, as the other eleven apostles were: without the instrumentality of any man (for he was “in nothing one whit behind the chiefest apostles”); and “by God the Father, who raised him from the dead.” And the Holy Ghost says,¹ “Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them,” that is, whereunto I have already called them (meaning the time of the preceding vision he had of Christ in the temple); not whereunto I only now publicly call them by the ministry of the prophets; as I hope to shew more fully afterwards. And so Ananias tells him, “The God of our fathers has chosen thee.”² And agreeably hereunto St. Paul always speaks of himself, as receiving his apostleship from God, or Christ, or both.³ St. Paul lays the greatest stress on his receiving the apostleship from God, or Christ, or both, it being a matter essential to his being an apostle, and being at the same time a matter that admitted of some doubt; he having been a persecuter near two years after Christ’s death. It was an objection also, by his adversaries, that he was only an apostle of man, or by men; as may be plainly collected from several passages of his epistle to the Galatians.

¹ Acts xiii. 2.² Ibid. xxii. 14.³ Rom. iii. 5. 1 Cor. i. 1. 2 Cor. i. 1. Eph. i. 1. Col. i. 1.

1 Tim. i. 1.

SECTION III.—*St. Paul was not made an Apostle till he was commanded to preach to the idolatrous Gentiles.*

However, though Saul could not be said to be an apostle, on any thing that came within the compass of this transaction: yet on seeing this glory, in the road to Damascus; and on receiving these notifications from Ananias, in that city; and being filled with the Holy Ghost; he preaches there, and in Arabia, and then again at Damascus, and afterwards goes to Jerusalem, three years after his conversion: where at first the apostles and brethren were so far from receiving him as such, that “they would not believe him to be a disciple.”¹ Is it possible to imagine him an apostle, and yet to be so little known to the rest of the apostles as not to be thought a disciple by them? From Jerusalem he goes to Cæsarea, thence to Tarsus in Cilicia, and other parts of Syria, and returns to Tarsus,² but preaches only to the Hebrew or Grecian Jews. The Scripture is not only silent about his preaching to any others; but I hope to shew, by plain inferences from thence, that he as yet preached to no others; though perhaps he might preach to the proselytes of the gate, after the year 41; having (at least about that time) a plain decision in the case of Cornelius

¹ Acts ix. 26.

² This is doubted by Doddridge.

to warrant him for going so far. And it seems to be intimated that he did preach to them when he went with Barnabas from Tarsus to Antioch,¹ which was in the year 43. But I shall endeavour to make it appear, that he did not turn to the Gentiles, that is, the idolatrous Gentiles, till about ten years after his conversion.

So that for many years after St. Paul's conversion he seems to have preached to the Jews, and perhaps for some part of that time to the proselytes of the gate ; as a zealous person, newly converted and enlightened, may be supposed to have done : or, more probably, by a particular order from Jesus Christ, and from being filled with the Holy Ghost, probably as a prophet and a teacher (as I shall endeavour to shew more fully by and by), though not yet in the character of an apostle ; having only received the Holy Ghost, together with a prediction, that " God had chosen him, that he should know His will, should see that Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth ;" and be a witness of all that he had seen and heard : ² but not having as yet seen Christ, nor received the doctrine of his apostleship, nor any directions to preach to the idolatrous Gentiles (of whom alone he was the apostle), nor testifying to them,

¹ Acts ii. 19. 27. ² Ibid. xvii. 18. 22. and xiv. 15.

nor exercising any of the powers peculiar to that office. However, though he does not immediately commence the apostle of the Gentiles; yet it is remarkable, that he, that was to be their apostle, was not only born, but is converted, and first preaches, on Gentile ground.

It was the second time, as I apprehend, when Saul went up to Jerusalem after his conversion, about the latter end of the year 43, that he commenced an apostle.

I. For then it was, that Christ “first appeared in person” to him,¹ whilst he was in the temple, “saying to him,” &c.; He having before this only made His glory to appear to him in the way to Damascus. That this was the second time of his coming to Jerusalem, after his conversion, may be seen by comparing Acts ix. 26, Gal. i. 18, with Acts xi. 29, 30, and xii. 25; and will be more fully proved in the sequel: and that falls on the latter end of the year 43.² So that, for the future, I shall speak sometimes of his seeing Christ by the time when it happened, in order to avoid a greater circumlocution that I must otherwise use: and Saul’s seeing Christ at this time was agreeable to Ananias’s prophecy at Saul’s conversion, as it is related by St. Luke to have been represented by St. Paul himself; ³ “The God of our fathers has

¹ Acts xxii. 18. ² See the Abstract. ³ Acts xxii. 14.

chosen thee, that thou shouldest know (not, “hast known”) and shouldest see (not, “hast seen”) that Just One (which shews he had not seen Him on the road to Damascus), and hear the voice of His mouth ;” that is, not shortly, saying in a voice from a heavenly cloud, as at your conversion, “Go to Damascus ;” but fully instructing you in a voice from His mouth (face to face) in the peculiar business of your apostolic charge, acquainting you with the message you are to carry, and when and to whom you are to carry it. And in this very account that St. Paul gives of himself to the Jews, he makes Christ’s appearing to him in the temple, to be an accomplishment of this prediction.* For he adds, “And it came to pass, that when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance, and saw Him, saying unto me,” &c. This, we may well be assured, was the first time Saul saw Christ, from the peculiar emphasis he here lays upon it.

II. And as this was the first time of his seeing Christ, so this was likewise the time when Christ “commissioned him to go to the Gentiles,” that is, the idolatrous Gentiles ; as Christ had in a former vision commissioned Peter to go to the proselytes of the gate.

* Acts xxii. 18.

For St. Paul says, that Christ then said to him, “ Make haste and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.” And then adds, “ Depart, for I will send thee far hence to the Gentiles ;”¹ and “ delivering thee from the Gentiles, to whom I now send thee ; to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.”² Now by Gentiles here the idolatrous Gentiles must be meant, as appears by the phrase of “ opening their eyes, turning them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God.” These are characteristics of the idolatrous Gentiles, and always used concerning them in the Acts and Epistles : but I think never used there (if any where) of Jews or proselytes of the gate. Besides, Christ had sent St. Peter to the devout Gentiles long before, in the vision of the sheet.³ The men of Cyprus and Cyrene had after that converted several others, which St. Luke takes notice of,⁴ as a remarkable transaction in the history of the church, consequent to St. Peter’s converting Cornelius and his family. After that, Barnabas and Saul converted many others.⁵ So that the command could not be to go to those to whom

¹ Acts xxii. 21.² Ibid. xxvi. 16. 18.³ Ibid. x. xi.⁴ Ibid. xi. 19, 20.⁵ Ibid. xi. 25, 26.

there had been a special command to Peter to go long before, as was well known in the church ; and to whom thereupon Saul, as well as others, had also gone before. He had spent a great deal of his time among those proselytes in Syria and Cilicia, countries near Judæa : but now Christ sends him “ far hence to the Gentiles.”

And that the idolatrous Gentiles are here meant, is yet clearer by the execution of this commission, as we shall see more fully by and by ; St. Paul and Barnabas hereupon turning to the idolatrous Gentiles. They preach to Sergius Paulus, an heathen, at his desire,¹ and to the heathens at Antioch in Pisidia at their desire² (τὰ ἔθνη) ; who are distinguished from the Jews and proselytes, to whom St. Paul and Barnabas spoke the day before ; saying, “ Ye men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.”³ From thence they go to Iconium, where they convert idolatrous Gentiles ;⁴ and speak to an assembly composed of none else at Lystra.⁵ And when they return, from converting them, to the church at Antioch in Syria, they “ rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.”⁶ Nothing can be plainer, than that by

¹ Acts xiii. 7. ² Ver. 42. ³ Ver. 15. See the Abstract.

⁴ See the Abstract. ⁵ Acts xiv. 9—19. ⁶ Ibid. xix. 27.

Gentiles here idolatrous Gentiles are meant ; since the door of faith had been opened to the proselyted Gentiles long before, by Peter and others, in those places of the Acts I just now quoted, about the year 41, and so on to the time of this commission.

And indeed, Gentiles are set in opposition to proselytes of the gate :¹ and in other texts of the Acts, as well as in these places which I have just now quoted, signifies idolatrous Gentiles ; unless there is something in the text or context that particularly restrains the meaning of the word to the proselytes of the gate ; and of which there are not a great many instances. Nor can it be supposed, that Gentiles in Scripture generally signify any others than idolatrous Gentiles ; considering the characters that are generally given of the Gentiles, and the opposite characters that are given of the proselytes of the gate. The Gentiles are described, as “being carried away or led after dumb idols,² in darkness³ (which the proselyted Gentiles, who had the knowledge of the law, could not be said to be) ; without God, without hope, under the power of the wicked one, and to work all manner of uncleanness with greediness.”⁴ Whereas the proselytes of the gate are said to

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 12.² 1 Cor. xii. 2. 1 Thess. i. 9.³ Acts xxvi. 18.⁴ Eph. ii. 2, 12. iv. 17, 19.

be “ of clean hands, and a pure heart ;”¹ and “ the Gentiles on whom God’s name is called ;”² and “ devout men ; fearing and worshiping God ; working righteousness ; and, religious proselytes.”³

That Paul is now commissioned to go to the idolatrous Gentiles, may appear from the phrase used Acts xiii. 2, and a passage Acts xv. 38, which may help us to explain that phrase. In the former place the Spirit says, “ Separate me Barnabas and Saul to the work (*εἰς τὸ ἔργον*) to which I have called them.” This plainly shews it was a peculiar business, in which they had not been engaged hitherto. True, say some : they were to go and preach the gospel farther than they had yet. Neither of them had been hitherto any farther than Syria and Cilicia, say they : now they were to go to Cyprus, to Pamphylia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia ; the three last being provinces of the Lesser Asia. But it plainly appears, that the work to which Saul and Barnabas were sent did not begin, in Saul’s opinion, in Cyprus or Pamphylia ; for he would not take Mark in the second apostolical journey he made, because he had “ departed from them, from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work” (*εἰς τὸ*

¹ Psal. xxiv. 4.

² Amos ix. 11.

³ Acts x. 2. xiii. 26. 43. xvi. 14. xviii. 7.

ἔργον);¹ which I think can only be thus explained: "That they had not preached to any assembly of idolatrous Gentiles, nor publicly and explicitly offered their commission to preach to them, till they came to Antioch, a town of Pisidia, the province beyond Pamphylia;" where they presently after began this work, and on the immediate view and dislike of which Mark seems to have left them. This observation points out to us very plainly, that the work to which Saul and Barnabas was separated, and to which Mark would not go, was the preaching to the idolatrous Gentiles; that was then immediately to begin at Antioch in Pisidia, probably by the same direction that would not suffer Paul to preach in Asia or Bithynia.²

Now if this appears upon the whole to have been the first time of Saul's being sent to the idolatrous Gentiles, it must be the time of his commencing an apostle. For he was only the apostle of the Gentiles, as I have endeavoured to prove in the Second Essay.

Thus I hope I have made it appear, that at this time Saul was first ordered to depart to the Gentiles; and I think it is more than probable that he at this time also "received immediately from Christ the revelation of the gospel, that he was forthwith to preach to them:"

¹ Acts xv. 38.

² Ibid. xvi. 6, 7

or, in the phraseology of Scripture, that he had “the word of wisdom committed to him.”

For first, he tells the Galatians in the most express terms, that “he received not the gospel he preached from man ; nor was he taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.”¹ And there is no other account, that seems to bid so fair to be the account of the precise time when Christ revealed it to him, as this ; since he is here first sent by Christ to the Gentiles. Now as he could never be sent, without having the message that he was to carry delivered to him, either some time before, or at that very time, or some time after ; so it does not seem congruous to the Divine Wisdom, to have delivered it before it was to be carried ; or to send Paul then, and not deliver him the errand he was to go upon till some time after. And therefore we may fully conclude, not only from the wisdom of God, but from the beauty and propriety that appear in all the Divine transactions of which any particular accounts are given us, that Christ acquainted *Saul with the message he was to carry to the Gentiles, at the very time that Christ told him that He (Christ) would then send him (Saul) to them. And thus “the word went forth out of Sion” (not from the road to Damascus), not only to the Jews, but also the Gentiles ; accord-

¹ Gal. i. 11, 12.

ing to the prediction in Psalm xi. 3, "Many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths : for out of Sion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

SECTION IV.—*On the time when St. Paul received his apostolic commission.*

I am the more confirmed in my opinion, that this was the precise time when Christ immediately revealed the gospel to Saul, that he was to preach to the Gentiles : from his acquainting the Corinthians, that "he had a great revelation made to him" at a time that agrees with the very time I am speaking of; and from saying several things of it, which seem to point out that this was the very matter of the revelation that was then made to him.¹

As to the agreement of time, St. Paul tells them, that it was about fourteen years ago.² Now he wrote his second epistle about the year 56; it being written (says Dr. Whitby, about, I think something above) a year after the first, which was written anno 55.³ Now from 58 it

¹ 2 Cor. xii. 1.

² Ver. 2.

³ I refer the reader to Dr. Whitby's Preface to the first and second epistle of St. Paul to that church.

was about fourteen years back to the latter end of 43, which was the second time of Saul's being at Jerusalem after his conversion.¹

The things that St. Paul relates "of that revelation,"² and which "point it out to be that of the gospel he was to preach to the Gentiles," are chiefly these :

1. That it was a vision and revelation.³ This agrees well with the account that is given us of his "seeing Christ," in accomplishment of Ananias's prediction, "That he should see that Just One, and likewise hear Him:" which he did, "saying unto him, Depart, for I will send thee far hence to the Gentiles." And it agrees well with the supposition of a full discovery of the message, he (Saul) was to carry; as well as of the persons to whom he was to carry it: especially since it is mentioned, as an accomplishment of Ananias's prediction, "that he should hear the voice of His mouth;" that is, have a full discovery of His good pleasure concerning him: as I have observed before. And it is remarkable that this word "revelation" is the very term that St. Paul makes use of, when he speaks of the discovery of the gospel by Christ to him.⁴

2. It was an "high vision and revelation." He speaks of them as the greatest of all his

¹ See the Abstract.

² 2 Cor. xii.

³ Ver. 1.

⁴ Gal. i. 12. Eph. iii. 3. Coloss. i. 26.

revelations: something whereof he might “boast and glory;” and which, if it did not set him above, would at least among other things shew that “he was not a whit behind, the chiefest of the apostles.”¹ To be sure, it was a revelation of far greater consequence than the highest of St. Peter’s, which was that of the sheet.² And it was a revelation that was abundantly full and clear; and that had like, “through the abundance of it, to have exalted him above measure;” and that made it necessary that something very afflictive and mortifying should accompany it, in order to abate the pride it might have otherwise occasioned. Now what vision, or revelation, are all these high characters so likely to agree in, as the vision of Christ, that qualified him to be an apostle; and the revelation of the grace of the gospel, and those unsearchable riches of Christ, that were then dispensed to him; and which he was then told, that he, as an apostle, should dispense forthwith to the Gentiles? or, in other words of his, that “mystery which had been hid in the deep counsel of God from ages, but was now to be made manifest:” which, as St. Paul tells the Colossians, was “Christ (or the gospel of Christ) in you (Gentiles), the hope of glory.”³ A revelation, to which all these characters agree,

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 5. xii. 1. ² Acts x. 2. ³ Coloss. i. 27.

must have been a revelation of something very useful and important ; since God does not use to reveal things of little or no consequence. And what revelation can be imagined of so great service and importance to mankind, as a revelation that the glad tidings of salvation were to be conveyed to the whole world ; with a declaration, that they were free from the weak, beggarly, and slavish elements of the Jewish law ?

St. Paul speaks of his gospel, to the Ephesians, in a strain very suitable to this, when he tells them in the third chapter of that epistle, “ For this cause, I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles ; if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which is given me to you-ward : how that by revelation (the same word that is used 2 Cor. xii. 1) He made known unto me the mystery (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit ; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel : Whereof I was made a minister, according to the grace of God given unto me, by the effectual working of His power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all

saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God, who hath created all things in Jesus Christ : To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

From all this it appears, that St. Paul speaks of this as the highest and greatest of all his revelations. Unless therefore a vision and revelation can be supposed of greater importance than the seeing Christ, and receiving from Him the revelation of the gospel of the Gentiles, and the qualifying him, and ordering him then immediately to impart it ; we must suppose that this was that very revelation ; the self-same that he mentions to have received Acts xxii. 17, when he fell into a trance in the temple.

I am far from denying that Paul might, in this revelation, have had some vision, view, or discovery, of the glory of heaven ; since he says, “ he was caught up into paradise and to the third heaven ; and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful (or possible) to utter.”¹

¹ 2 Cor. xii. 1. 4.

But I take it, that that revelation was not made for St. Paul's speculation ; but to encourage him against all the difficulties he was to encounter, in making the other revelations (then made to him) known to the Gentile world ; an account of which difficulties he gives us, 2 Cor. xi., from ver. 23 to the end of the chapter. Just as God was pleased to shew His glory to Moses, to support him under the great discouragements he met with, in conducting the children of Israel through the wilderness, from their idolatry of the golden calf ; and the wrath that waxed hot against them for it, as may be seen in Exodus.*

St. Paul adds in the account that he gives the Corinthians of this vision and revelation, “ That, lest he should have been exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelation, he had a thorn in the flesh,” (that the adversaries, “ the false apostles, the emissaries or the messengers of Satan,”) might have something where-with “ to buffet him.” For this I take, with Dr. Whitby, to be the true sense of ἄγγελος Σατᾶν ἵνα μὲ κολαφίζῃ. The more full meaning of which I apprehend to be this : When St. Paul found, that by the vision of Christ, and the revelation of this mystery of the gospel, which was to be then immediately published to the Gentiles, by him, as their apostle ; and that by

* Chapters xxxii. xxxiii. xxxiv

the sight he had of the heavenly glory, to encourage him to encounter the difficulties of this work; he was not only raised to an higher pitch of divine favour than Moses (who had the highest revelations under the law, with whom our apostle, who had his head full of Jewish knowledge, seems often to compare, and to whom he refers himself and his ministrations, especially in this second epistle to the Corinthians), but even beyond the chiefest of the apostles, to whom also (especially Peter) St. Luke often takes care to give him the preference in the Acts of the Apostles, as he himself does in some of his Epistles; as I have shewn in the Second Essay. (Even those three who were Christ's witnesses from the baptism of John, of all His preaching, discourses, and miracles, and of His transfiguration, as well as His ascension, and the descent of the Holy Ghost.) Lest, I say, he should have been too much exalted by an high sense of these transcendent favours and discoveries, he was struck with a palsy: perhaps from a stronger impression of the heavenly glory on his nerves than human nature, or at least his constitution, could bear (as we read of some of the ancient prophets being sick and faint after their visions;¹ and as the brightness of the light that appeared to him on the road to Da-

¹ Dan. viii. 17.

musculus struck him blind). This, it may be, rendered him of a stammering speech, and very likely of such convulsive and distorted motion of the muscles of his face, as made his appearance very ridiculous and contemptible; and made him then fear that he should not succeed in his message to the Gentiles, who affected eloquence, elocution, and outward appearance (just as Moses was afraid he should not succeed with Pharaoh for the same reason¹); especially since it would afterwards give his adversaries, the apostles, messengers, or emissaries of Satan, a great occasion of rendering him mean and contemptible to his hearers. He therefore besought the Lord thrice, "that it might depart from him." But after he was assured, that "Christ's strength should be made perfect in his weakness, and that His grace should be sufficient for him, he glories in (these) his (bodily) infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest (or appear to rest) upon him." He therefore takes pleasure in (these bodily) "infirmities, and in the reproaches that the adversaries might cast on him, on the account of these infirmities: because when he was weak, (namely, on the account of these bodily infirmities,) then was he strong in Christ, and in the power of His might." For he then plainly saw that it must necessarily

¹ Exod. iv. 10.

appear, that the success which should attend his ministrations, and which did afterwards attend them, could not arise "from the enticing words of man's wisdom, but from the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power;"¹ or, as he expresses it in another place, "that the excellency of the power was of God, and not of him;"² or, as he yet speaks in a more exalted strain,³ "that the weapons of his warfare were not carnal, but mighty, through God; to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." This interpretation of this difficult place seems to me to agree so well with every passage of this place itself, and with my present purpose, that I hope my reader will forgive me for having dwelt so long upon it; and the rather, since I hope too that I have added something to what Dr. Whitby has in general so well observed upon it.

3. I am still the more inclined to think that our blessed Lord gave Saul the message he was to carry to the Gentiles at the second time of his being at Jerusalem after his conversion, because "there were none of the apostles present at Jerusalem at that time;" as I have endea-

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 4. ² 2 Cor. iv. 7. ³ Ibid. x. 4.

voured to prove in the Second Essay. Now it seems to me most likely that our blessed Lord should give Saul the message, or gospel, that he was to publish to the Gentiles, when there were not any of the apostles at Jerusalem, that so there might be no pretence to say that he was an apostle of a lower order; but that it might appear that he had his gospel from Christ alone, and that he was not behind any of the apostles. St. Paul speaks fully to this purpose, when he informs the Galatians, that he learnt “nothing from any of the apostles; but had the revelation of His gospel from Christ alone.”¹

4. As I think it most likely, that he had his apostolical mission from Christ at Jerusalem at a time when there was no apostle there; so I likewise think it most likely, that the notification of this mission should be immediately made in the church of Antioch; a church which was collected, and which met on Gentile ground, where there was no apostle; but which was full of proselytes of the gate, as appears from the Acts:² and that he and Barnabas should be sent by such a church to the work, as far as a church could send them (that is, that they should be recommended to the grace of God by their prayers, as we shall see more fully by

¹ Gal. i. 12. 20. ii. 6.

² Acts xi. 26.

and by), as the apostles and apostolic men were sent to convert the Jews and Samaritans, and proselytes of the gate, from the church of Jerusalem.¹ Now this agrees exactly with my hypothesis; for if he was sent by Christ at the time of his vision in the temple, then to be sure that was the mission which was notified to the church of Antioch.²

SECTION V.—*On the time when St. Paul began to execute his apostolic commission.*

IV. But what must put it out of doubt that the second time of his being at Jerusalem after his conversion was the time when he received the message from Christ, is, that now he first carries it.

For, 1. as it cannot be supposed that Christ would reveal the gospel of the Gentiles to Saul long before he intended it should be published; so it cannot be supposed that Saul should have it revealed to him any considerable time before he actually published it; since a revelation of such importance must be supposed to be made for the benefit of the idolatrous Gentiles, and not for Saul's speculation and entertainment: and yet Saul must have hid this glorious talent a great while in a napkin, if this revelation was

¹ Acts viii. 14. xi. 22.

² Ibid. xiii. 1.

made to him even at the first time of his being at Jerusalem after his conversion ; which was anno 38 (that is, about seven or eight years before he preached to the idolatrous Gentiles, for whose sake alone it was revealed to him); much more, if it was made at his conversion, which was three years before that, namely, anno 35.

2. It appears plainly, that, as soon as Saul had received Christ's commands, at the second time of his being at Jerusalem after his conversion, he then actually carried this message to the idolatrous Gentiles; at least as soon as Christ's commands to him were notified to the church, by the mouth of the prophets in the church of Antioch : for he then presently sails to Cyprus, and there converts a single heathen, the proconsul of the island, the first-fruits of the idolatrous Gentiles.¹ Soon after he comes to Antioch in Pisidia, where the assembly seems to be composed chiefly indeed of Jews and religious proselytes, or proselytes of the gate ;² but also, as it seems, of some Gentiles and idolatrous Gentiles too, by their being distinguished from the Jews and religious proselytes.³ And the next sabbath day, on the perverseness of the Jews, he and Barnabas "waxing bold," declare, that though it was necessary that the word

¹ Acts xiii. 7—13.

² Ibid. 43.

³ Ver. 42. compared with ver. 43. See the Abstract.

should be first preached to “you (Jews),” yet, since you put it from you, and “judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles;”¹ about the beginning of the year 46. And it ought to be observed here, by the way, that St. Luke on this occasion says, that on the great perverseness of the Jews, “Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and turned to the Gentiles.” If Christ had been publicly preached before to a number of idolatrous Gentiles, where is the force of St. Luke’s remark, that they “waxed bold?” Though indeed, as Christ had not been preached to the idolatrous Gentiles before, there is a great beauty in it: for, considering the strong prejudices of the whole body of Christians then against the idolatrous Gentiles, it required a very high degree of courage to turn to them, even on this amazing perverseness of the Jews. St. Paul uses a like expression concerning Esaias’ clear prophecy about the calling of the Jews.² But “Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not. I was made manifest unto them that asked not for me. But unto Israel he saith, All day long have I stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.” I cannot but observe here, as I go along, that God ordered it so in His providence, that, as the first great harvest of devout Gentiles should be made

¹ Acts xiii. 46.² Rom. x. 20, 21.

at Antioch in Syria, so the first great harvest of idolatrous Gentiles should be made at Antioch in Pisidia. From Antioch in Pisidia they go to Iconium, where they speak in the synagogue, as they had done at Antioch in Pisidia. But the first time they spake to a number of heathens only, which was at Lystra, the town whither they fled from Iconium: they there say, "that in the times that were hitherto past, God suffered all nations to walk in their own ways, sending no messenger to restrain them;" but now sends us, "to preach to you to turn from these vanities (heathen deities) to the living God."¹ This carries very much the air of this being the first time of the gospel's being preached to an unmixed assembly of heathens. I am sure, carrying that in our mind will add force and beauty to St. Paul's manner of expressing himself on this occasion. Compare this speech of his to that he made, in his second apostolical journey, at Athens; and it still confirms one in this thought. That was also an unmixed assembly of heathens; his speech at Athens is very similar to this at Lystra. But the gospel had been then preached by Paul to the heathens in several parts of the world; and therefore, after saying to them, that "God winked at the times of former ignorance," he adds with great

¹ Acts xiv. 15, 16.

propriety, "but commandeth all men every where to repent." ¹ After St. Paul and Barnabas left Lystra, they go through parts of the Lesser Asia, converting idolatrous Gentiles; then return to Antioch in Syria, from whence they "had been recommended to the grace of God, for the work which they had fulfilled. And—rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles" ² (which shews plainly that the door of faith had never been opened to the idolatrous Gentiles before). After which, St. Paul and Barnabas go out on a second progress among the Gentiles: but, on their differing about Mark, they part; Barnabas going to Cyprus, Paul through all the Lesser Asia; then to Macedonia, and Greece, and at last in another journey to Rome, and other parts of Italy, and perhaps to Spain.

3. It makes very much for my purpose, that no epistle of St. Paul was written till after his first peregrination to convert the idolatrous Gentiles, which was after the second time of his being at Jerusalem; his first epistle being written in the year 52. If he was an apostle from his conversion, how comes it that he wrote no epistle to the Gentiles till after the time of his vision in the temple?

¹ Acts xvii. 30.

² Ibid. xiv. 26, 27.

SECTION VI.—*On the time when St. Paul communicated to the church at Jerusalem his preaching to the idolatrous Gentiles.*

4. What adds great strength to all the proofs I have already given that Saul did not preach the gospel before the time of that vision, is, that he did not communicate his gospel, that is, the gospel which he preached to the Gentiles, to any of the apostles, till “fourteen years after his first being at Jerusalem,”¹ that is, till about the year 49; which was the third time of his being at Jerusalem. He communicated it then by revelation, or special orders from Christ, to go up thither for that purpose as well as others; and then only to James, and Cephas, and John,² whom he calls “them that were of reputation,”³ and who, he says, “seemed to be somewhat,”⁴ and “who seemed to be pillars,”⁵ and to them “but privately; lest by any means he should run, or had run, in vain.”⁶ Such would have been the opposition and fury of the Jewish Christians themselves against his gospel, from their known bigotry to the law. This is not at all surprising, if St. Paul did not preach to the idolatrous Gentiles till after his being the second time at Jerusalem; since then the third

¹ Gal. ii. 1, 2.

² Ver. 9.

³ Ver. 2.

⁴ Ver. 6.

⁵ Ver. 9.

⁶ Ver. 2.

time of his being there, in the year 49 (or, as he expresses it, "fourteen years" after his conversion, which was in the year 35), was the next time of his being there, after his preaching to, or becoming the apostle of, the Gentiles. But his silence about this matter to all the apostles, till the third time of his being at Jerusalem, can never be accounted for, if he had preached the gospel to the idolatrous Gentiles before his being there the second time; no more than his not preaching it to the idolatrous Gentiles before his second time of being there can be accounted for, if it had been revealed to him before that time.

5. As St. Paul did not communicate the gospel he preached to the idolatrous Gentiles, to any of the apostles at Jerusalem till the third time of his being there, and then only to three of them privately; so he does not seem to have communicated it to the elders, and the church of the believing Jews at Jerusalem, till the fifth time of his being there, about the year 58, as seems to be pretty plainly intimated in the Acts;¹ for then St. Luke says, that "Paul went unto James, all the elders being present, and declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord:"

¹ Chap. xxi. 17, 18, 19.

and then give him advice how to clear himself to the multitude, from a calumny that seems to have been raised against him (and, as it should seem, on the very first news that had reached the church of Jerusalem of his teaching the idolatrous Gentiles), namely, that “he taught the Jews that were among the Gentiles to forsake Moses ;”¹ being satisfied themselves with the account he gave of the gospel he preached to the Gentiles ; and withal intimating, that the Jewish converts perhaps might not be dissatisfied with that account neither, when they came to hear of his success among the idolatrous Gentiles, no more than they were with the decree about the proselytes of the gate. But that, as the thing that provoked them was the report, that he taught the “Jews among the Gentiles to forsake Moses,” it would be necessary for him to shew them that that was false ; and that he was so far from teaching the Jews that were among the Gentiles any such thing, that “he himself also walked orderly, and kept the law :” which he might do, by vowing the vow of a Nazarite. Thus this mystery revealed to Saul was made known by him to the Jewish church but by very slow degrees, for very wise reasons (some of which I have endeavoured to point out in the Preface), and agreeably to

¹ Acts xxi. 21.

other revelations of mysteries, very observable in Scripture.¹

Now is it likely, that Saul should be an apostle the first time of his being at Jerusalem, much less at his conversion three years before that, and yet that the gospel of his apostleship should not be known to the elders, and the rest of the church at Jerusalem, till the fifth time of his being there, namely, about the year 58, twenty years after the first time of his being at Jerusalem, or twenty-three years after the time of his conversion, when the contrary opinions suppose him to be an apostle? The reason of his not communicating it to the elders the fourth time of his being at Jerusalem seems to have been, that he had no proper opportunity to do it during the short stay he then made there; or, which is more likely, because God did not like that it should be declared so soon.

There is another incident in the account which we have of St. Paul's coming to Jerusalem at this time, which may serve to shew us that this was the first time of his declaring the conversion of the idolatrous Gentiles to the church of Jerusalem; which is this. He at this time brought "alms with him to his nation" (or to the saints of his nation), as he tells Fe-

¹ Dr. Doddridge objects to the probability of this statement.—See his notes in loc.

lix :¹ these alms he had collected with great industry, by writing letters, and sending messengers, and making journies himself to the several churches of Asia, Macedonia, and Greece, from which he collected them. Some of these churches gave very liberally ;² and the contributions at last, through his care, being so considerable, St. Paul would not be entrusted with them alone, but had messengers of these churches joined in the trust ; and hired ships, and afterwards carriages, to carry himself, the messengers, and contributors, to Jerusalem : a thing not usual with St. Paul, who sometimes “ wrought with his hands, to supply his own necessities and the necessities of those who were with him.”³ Now it is highly probable that he laboured this collection, which he had never made among the idolatrous Gentile converts before, that so he might reconcile the minds of the Jewish believers to the account of the conversion of these idolatrous Gentiles, which he now designed to impart to the church of Jerusalem, as news he thought proper to impart to them now, though he had never thought it fit to impart it to them before. If this was not the reason of Paul’s making and carrying these collections to Jerusalem now, why did he not

¹ Acts xxx. 17.² 2 Cor. viii. 1--6.³ Acts xx. 34. See the Abstract.

make and carry them thither at the end of his second apostolic journey, anno 54; since that was after the agreement made between the apostles of the circumcision and himself, and Barnabas, about this matter; that agreement being made at the end of his first apostolic journey, anno 49? And on this account it is, that he is so solicitous that the alms might be well accepted of the saints at Jerusalem, as we may see he was, by his desiring the Romans to pray for him, “That the service which he had for Jerusalem, or this ministry, might be accepted of the saints there.”¹ Alms are seldom unwelcome: what could then make him doubt, whether these alms would be well accepted of the saints at Jerusalem, especially since the alms which he carried to the poor saints at Jerusalem from Antioch had been received?² What could be the reason then why he so much feared whether these alms would be well accepted; but that, as they came from devout Gentiles, these came from the idolatrous Gentiles, converted indeed to the faith, but who did not abstain from things offered to idols, from things strangled, and from blood; and whom he was therefore afraid they would esteem unclean, notwithstanding their having been “sanctified by the Holy Ghost,” as his expression

¹ Rom. xv. 25, 26, 27, 28. 31.

² Acts xi. 29, 30.

is?¹ From this incident therefore, and some particular passages relating to it, it is natural to conclude, that this was the time when St. Paul first designed to communicate, and actually did communicate, the news of the conversion of the idolatrous Gentiles to the church at Jerusalem: especially if, as it is plain on the one hand, that he did not carry these contributions before his third apostolic journey; so it should appear on the other, that he carried contributions from the Gentile to the Jewish believers at Jerusalem, at the end of his fourth apostolic journey also; as there is some probability he did.²

SECTION VII.—*Objections considered.*

If it be objected, that St. Paul is said³ “to have declared, what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles, by him and Barnabas among the Gentiles;” which was in the year 49; I answer, that I think it may be made to appear, that that was understood at that time by all the apostles (except three), elders, and brethren, to whom Paul and Barnabas made that relation, to refer to the proselytes of the gate converted to Christianity only; and not to the idolatrous Gentiles: as I hope to prove in the Fourth Essay.

¹ Rom. xv. 16. ² See the First Essay. ³ Acts xv. 12.

Thus I imagine it will appear, that Saul was not sent to the idolatrous Gentiles, nor preached to them, till the second time of his being at Jerusalem, after his conversion : but I am sensible this is liable to objections, which deserve an answer.

I. It may be objected, that Saul preached before this time to the Jews, and even to the proselyted Gentiles ; and therefore was even an apostle of the Gentiles before this time. I answer, 1. That Saul's preaching to the Jews does not make him an apostle, because he was the apostle of the Gentiles, and not of the Jews ; as I have proved in the Second Essay. 2. That he could not be called the apostle of the Gentiles for preaching to the proselytes of the gate ; 1. Because the proselytes of the gate are not the persons designed by Gentiles in Scripture, unless there be something that shews particularly that they are intended. 2. St. Peter and others had preached to the proselyted Gentiles before Saul ; whereas he glories in it, as a special grace and favour to him, that " the mystery of calling the Gentiles to the fellowship of the gospel was reserved to be revealed by him." ¹ But chiefly, 3. Because St. Paul preached something new to the idolatrous Gentiles

¹ Eph. iii. 2, 3. 5. 7, 8, 9, 10. Gal. i. 15, 16, and in several other places which I quoted, fully to this purpose, in the Second Essay.

after his vision in the temple, different from what he and others preached to the proselytes of the gate before ; namely, the gospel of the Gentiles. He and others preached to the Jews the faith of Christ ; but withal telling them, that they must remain Jews, and were bound by the laws of Moses as Jews ; though they were not bound by them as the people of God, or bound by them as the terms of justification and eternal life. St. Peter, he, and others, preached to the proselytes of the gate the Christian faith ; but they were so far from releasing them from the obligation they were under to the law of Moses, of abstaining from things strangled, and from blood, and from the pollutions of idols ; that their decree was, that they were still bound by those laws. But what St. Paul preached to the idolatrous Gentiles was Christian faith, without the observance of any one of the laws of Moses ; which no man preached before him, or knew till he preached. This he calls “ his gospel ;”¹ “ the gospel he preached among the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ ;”² “ the mystery of the gospel ;”³ “ the fellowship of the mystery for which he was a prisoner ;”⁴ “ the mystery which had been hid from ages, but is now made manifest to His saints ; whereof

¹ Rom. xvi. 25.

² Eph. iii. 8. 12.

³ Ibid. vi. 19.

⁴ Ibid. iii. 1—12.

he was made the minister.”¹ Besides, 4. There was not only a difference between St. Paul’s preaching before and after his being the second time at Jerusalem after his conversion, on account of the matter he preached, and the persons he preached to ; but in the manner of doing it : having only preached, taught, proved, or disputed, before his vision in the temple ; but testifying and witnessing immediately after it ; that is, preaching in the peculiar manner and character of an apostle. But I shall but just mention this here, intending to speak more fully to it presently.

II. It may be objected, that Paul tells King Agrippa, that “ as he was going to Damascus, Christ bid him rise, and stand on his feet—for He would deliver him from the Gentiles, to whom He then sent him ;” as Paul himself relates it.² I confess, this looks at first sight as if Paul had said, that as he was going to Damascus, Christ had sent him to the Gentiles. But I think this will not appear in that view, on looking more narrowly into it. For, 1. If we consult the history itself of what passed on the road to Damascus, Acts ix., we shall not find that any words of this kind are there related to have been said by Christ to Saul. 2. We shall find some words said there by Christ to

¹ Col. i. 20. 26. See the Second Essay. ² Acts xxvi. 16.

Saul, from whence I think we may fairly infer, that these words were not said at the time. The words I refer to are (on Saul's asking, "what Christ would have him to do"), ver. 6, "Arise, (which is the same with "Arise, and stand on thy feet," Acts xxvi. 16,) and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." These words referring Saul entirely to what should be told him in the city, makes it highly improbable that any thing particular, especially any thing so very particular as that He would deliver him from the people and the Gentiles, to whom He then sent him, should have been said to him at that time. It seems much more probable, so high an honour as this designed him should have been notified to him by Ananias, after his three days' fast, to whom indeed some intimation of this kind seems to have been made known, Acts xxii. 5. And Paul relates the transaction on the road to Damascus precisely in this manner, Acts xxii. 8, 9, 10. 3. In the relation, Acts xxii., he hints that Ananias said these words to him at Damascus (not Christ on the road thither); namely, "for I have appeared unto thee, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those in the which I will appear unto thee," ver. 16, as will appear by Acts xxii. 15. 4. It appears from Acts xxii. 21, that these words, ver. 17, "deli-

vering thee from the Gentiles, unto whom I now send thee," were spoken by Christ to Saul at the time of the vision in the temple; and therefore it is not at all probable they were spoken by Christ on the road to Damascus. I cannot but take the history, Acts ix., to be exact as far as it goes; both as it is a history, and as it is confirmed by Paul's relation, Acts xxii. And I believe St. Paul's relation, Acts xxii., is very critical and exact; because it is very particular as to all circumstances, and because Paul well knew how little candour he must expect from that audience. On the other hand, I take the account St. Paul gives of this matter to Agrippa, Acts xxvi., to be more summary and complicated, because he would not detain a king, and the rest of that noble audience, by descending to too great a minuteness, and because he seems to expect a more favourable and candid hearing than from the Jews, Acts xxii. I therefore apprehend the account, Acts xxvi., is to be explained and set right by Acts ix. and Acts xxii., and not those two places by Acts xxvi. This last account seems to me to be putting every thing shortly together, without distinguishing the different times pertinent to Paul's purpose, that had occurred on the road, at Damascus, or in the temple. And it deserves to be observed, that even in this account, summary and complicated as it is, he first hints shortly his trance in

the temple, in these words, “ of those things in which I shall appear to thee;” that is, at the time of the trance in the temple : and says this in opposition to those things “ which he had seen;” meaning the transaction in the way to Damascus : and then farther adds, that his obedience to this command was performed, “ by shewing first unto them of Damascus, and Jerusalem, and through all the coast of Judæa, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent.”¹ So that I apprehend, in this short narrative to King Agrippa, both the appearance of Christ’s glory in the way to Damascus, and of His person to St. Paul at the time of his trance in the temple, and of what Ananias said to him at Damascus, are included (though not minutely distinguished, that not being material to his purpose before Agrippa); and consequently, that this, instead of being any objection, may serve to confirm my opinion, that St. Paul never preached to the idolatrous Gentiles till after the second time of his being at Jerusalem, after his conversion.

III. Some perhaps may object too, that St. Paul, in the account he gives of himself to the Galatians,² seems to give it very differently; telling them, “ that when it pleased God, who separated him from his mother’s womb (allud-

¹ Acts xxvi. 20.

² Gal. i. 15, 16, 17.

ing to the pretended separation of his sect of the Pharisees to a greater degree of holiness and sanctity), and called him by His grace to reveal His Son in him, that he might preach Him among the heathen, immediately he conferred not with flesh and blood, neither went he up to Jerusalem, to them which were apostles before him ; but went into Arabia.” ‘They may pretend, that the sense of these words is this : That as soon as God revealed his Son to St. Paul, he immediately went and preached, as an apostle, to the Gentiles in Arabia ; which has generally been the opinion of divines. But how does it appear that he preached to the Gentiles in Arabia ? were there no Hebrews, or proselytes of righteousness, to preach to in a country bordering on Judæa ?

SECTION VIII.—*The gradual impartation of Revelation to the world, a proof of the probability that the proselytes of the gate would be converted before the idolatrous Gentiles.*

But however that is, it cannot be the meaning of his preaching to “ the Heathen ” in this place, that he immediately preached to the Gentiles, even if we should by “ Heathen ” here understand the proselyted Gentiles ; much less if we understand by “ the Heathen ” here, the idolatrous Gentiles (which is to be sure the sense

of the place), and that for this reason ; that St. Paul was converted in 35, and consequently, according to this opinion, must have preached to proselyted Gentiles in Arabia immediately after : whereas Cornelius and his family were the first-fruits of the proselyted Gentiles, as St. Peter and St. James expressly declare ;¹ and were converted by St. Peter,² agreeably to our Saviour's promise to him, " of giving him the keys of the kingdom of heaven ;"³ St. Peter being then " chosen from among the apostles," to preach the word of the gospel to the Gentiles, as well as by the vision of the sheet, the vision of Cornelius, and the revelation of the Spirit.⁴ Now St. Peter did not convert Cornelius and his family till about the year 41, six years after this opinion supposes St. Paul to have converted idolatrous Gentiles in Arabia. And it is taken notice of as a very remarkable occurrence in the history of the church, that after St. Peter had converted Cornelius, then others converted other proselytes ;⁵ nor can it be supposed that St. Paul converted proselyted Gentiles before St. Peter, who first opened the kingdom of heaven to them. And much less can it be supposed that St. Paul converted idolatrous Gentiles before Peter converted proselytes of the gate.

¹ Acts xv. 7. 14. ² Ibid. x. ³ Matt. xvi. 19.

⁴ Acts x. 5. 11—21. See also the Abstract.

⁵ Acts xi. 10. 20. 24. See the Fourth Essay.

If any can imagine that St. Paul converted the idolatrous Gentiles before St. Peter converted the proselytes of the gate; they do not consider the wise order in which God directed Christianity to be spread: first, by preaching it to the Jews at Jerusalem; then of Judæa;¹ then of Samaria;² then to the proselytes of the gate;³ and lastly, to the idolatrous Gentiles;⁴ agreeable to our Saviour's prediction,⁵ "and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth:" and to our Saviour's own example, who first taught at Jerusalem, and in Judæa, then at Samaria, and at last at Galilee; and not only to publicans and sinners, and centurions, but to a woman of Galilee. Here is a beautiful gradation, each step leading to another; which those who imagine St. Paul converted idolatrous Gentiles in Arabia five or six years before St. Peter converted the proselytes of the gate, entirely destroy. Besides, as Arabia bordered on Judæa, if Paul had converted idolatrous Gentiles to Christianity there, the news soon reached the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem; who could not then have been so surprised, as they were,⁶ at the news of Peter's converting the proselytes of the gate; saying

¹ Acts x. 36. ² Ibid. viii. 5. Ann. 34. ³ Ibid. x. 11.

xi. 19, 20. Ann. 41.

⁴ Ibid. xiii. 12, 46. Ann. 45, 46.

⁵ Ibid. i. 8.

⁶ Ibid. xi. 18.

with astonishment, “ Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life ! ”

So that the sense of this place cannot be, that St. Paul went to Arabia to convert the heathen ; but, as I apprehend, is this : that when God (who had always designed St. Paul for the apostleship of the Gentiles from his mother’s womb) converted him to Christianity, he did not consult any man, or learn any thing from any man, or go to consult the apostles at Jerusalem ; but that, instead of going to Jerusalem, he went and preached Christ immediately in Arabia, where he could then do it safely ; Aretas the king of Arabia being then willing to protect all the Christians (whom Herod hated), on account of the war there was between them and Herod ; to shew that he learnt what he preached of no man (Christ not having been preached there before), and to avoid building on another man’s foundation ; which he says he never cared to do : ¹ but without saying to whom he preached ; that we are left to collect from other places of Scripture. From whence, I hope, it is by this time plain, that it was to the Jews only. And I think it is highly probable from this very place, that what St. Paul preached at his first conversion, and of which he speaks to the Galatians,² was not the gospel

¹ Rom. xv. 2. 2 Cor. xii. 17. ² Gal. i. 15, 16, 17.

he preached to the Gentiles ; but only the same faith which the other apostles preached to the Jews ; since he says,¹ that all “ that the churches of Judæa knew of him was, that he preached the faith which he once destroyed ;” that is, the faith the other apostles preached to the Jews ; namely, as St. Luke says of him, that “ Jesus is the Son of God, or very Christ ;”² but not the gospel that he by special revelation preached to the Gentiles ; of which he seems to speak in the next chapter as a distinct thing ; when he says, “ Then fourteen years after I went up to Jerusalem, and communicated that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles.”³

St. Paul is in this place vindicating himself from the aspersion of his adversaries ; who said, that he was not an apostle, or at least that he was but an apostle of a secondary order, and had had all his knowledge and authority from some of the other apostles at Jerusalem ; as an attentive reader will easily perceive from the first, second, and third chapters of this epistle. St. Paul vindicates himself from this aspersion, 1. by assuming a style that strongly implies the contrary ;⁴ 2. by asserting expressly, that he had his gospel from none but Christ ;⁵ 3. by letting the Galatians see, that he could not receive any thing from any of the apostles

¹ Gal. i. 23.² Acts ix. 20. 22.³ Ver. 2.⁴ Ver. 1—5.⁵ Ver. 11, 12.

the three first years after his conversion ; having gone into Arabia (and not to Jerusalem), and then returned to Damascus.¹ 4. By letting them know, that when he went to Jerusalem the first time after his conversion, he saw but two apostles, and staid there but fifteen days, and then went to Syria and Cilicia, and not to any of the churches of Judæa, to whom he was unknown ; but to whom it was most likely he would have gone, if he had been sent by those apostles. 5. By telling them, that the third time he went up to Jerusalem (none of the apostles being there the second time) it was by express revelation ; and that he was so far from learning any thing from them, that he imparted to them the knowledge or the gospel that he preached among the Gentiles, which they had no notice of before ; and that he was then owned and received as the apostle of the Gentiles by them.² This I take to be the true sense and intention of St. Paul in this place. But I see nothing here that shews that he was an apostle at his first conversion ; or that he preached to the Gentiles in Arabia as an apostle soon after.

V. As I do not find that St. Paul had the word of wisdom committed to him before this, or that he communicated it to the Gentiles ; so it does not appear that he gives any instance

¹ Acts ix. 15—17.

² Chap. ii. 1 11.

before this, of his having the “word of knowledge,” as I have explained it, in the First Essay; and proved it to belong to the apostles, in the Second. But as the discovery that the gospel was to be preached to the idolatrous Gentiles was one high instance of that word of knowledge, which was now committed to him; so, after this discovery, we find many instances of it in his epistles.¹

SECTION IX.—*On the proofs that St. Paul did not preach to the idolatrous Gentiles before his second going up to Jerusalem after his conversion.*

VI. By what I have said, I think it appears plainly, that St. Paul did not preach to the idolatrous Gentiles before the second time of his being at Jerusalem after his conversion; though that was the distinguishing work of his apostleship. I think it will yet make it clearer, that he did not commence an apostle till after that time; if it be considered, that he did not testify or exercise any of the powers and prerogatives common to him with the rest of the apostles, or peculiar to himself, before that time: but that (as we have shewn) immediately after that time, he set about one peculiar part of his function; namely, preaching to the idolatrous Gentiles;

¹ See the Second Essay.

so also it may be now made to appear, that immediately after that time, he likewise preached in the character of an apostle, and exercised the other powers and prerogatives, that were peculiar, or common, to him, with the rest of the apostles.

1. Prophets are said to exhort;¹ evangelists are said to preach;² others are said to teach;³ and apostles are said to witness or testify.⁴ And agreeably hereunto Saul, who was a teacher and a prophet,⁵ immediately after his conversion, is said to “preach Christ in the synagogues;”⁶ “to prove that this (namely, Jesus of Nazareth) is very Christ;”⁷ “to speak boldly (I think it should be rendered “publicly” or “openly”) in the name of the Lord Jesus; to dispute against the (unbelieving) Grecians;”⁸ and “to teach the people at Antioch.”⁹ But St. Paul acquaints us, that when Christ appeared to him, at the second time of his being at Jerusalem after his conversion, He (Christ) said to him, “Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.”¹⁰ So that now first Saul had a “testimony” to bear:

¹ Acts xi. 23. xv. 32.

² Ibid. viii. 5. xii. 35. compared with chap. xxi. 8.

³ Ibid. xviii. 25. + See the Second Essay.

⁵ Acts xiii. 1. ⁶ Ibid. ix. 20. ⁷ Ver. 22. ⁸ Ver. 29.

⁹ Ibid. xi. 26. ¹⁰ Ibid. xxii. 18.

and though the Jews at Jerusalem would not receive it, yet he was to carry it to the Gentiles, to whom Christ then sent him,¹ “to be a witness of the things in which Christ had appeared to him.” After this, he “declares,” or witnesses, “that God had raised up Jesus again,” as well as the rest of the apostles; “who, coming up with Christ from Galilee to Jerusalem, were His witnesses to the people.”² That the eleven are to be understood by those who, coming up with Christ from Galilee to Jerusalem, were His witnesses unto the people, is proved in the Second Essay.

St. Paul appeals to the elders of the church of Ephesus, “that he had testified both to the Jews and to the Greeks.”³ And when our blessed Lord appeared unto him in the castle at Jerusalem, He “bids him be of good cheer, for that as he had testified of Him in Jerusalem, so he should bear witness also at Rome.”⁴ And he declares to King Agrippa, that, after he was sent to the Gentiles, he continued witnessing both to small and great, “That Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead; and should shew light unto the people, and unto the Gentiles.”⁵ And when St. Paul was come to Rome, according to our

¹ Acts xxvi. 17. ² Ibid. xiii. 31. ³ Ibid. xx. 17—21.

⁴ Ibid. xxiii. 11. ⁵ Ibid. xxvi. 22, 23.

Saviour's prediction,¹ St Luke acquaints us, that Paul "testified the kingdom of God."² Thus we see this word, which, if I mistake not, will be found a word applied to none of the ministers of Christ's kingdom in the apostolic times, but to the apostles only (as I have proved in the Second Essay), is frequently made use of by St. Luke, in relation to Paul, after Christ's appearing to him the second time of his being at Jerusalem after his conversion : though it is never used in relation to him before that time ; any more than in relation to any other of the prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, or other ministers of the church.

2. There seems to be something that deserves our notice in the superior "courage and resolution" that shewed itself in all St. Paul's behaviour, after the second time of his being at Jerusalem. Before that time, which was the time of his commencing an apostle, he always avoids dangers. At Damascus, he is let down the wall in a basket ;³ and from Jerusalem, he flies to Tarsus.⁴ But, after his being the second time at Jerusalem, he and Barnabas "waxed bold" at Antioch in Pisidia ;⁵ he endures stoning at Lystra ;⁶ will not go out of the prison, when the doors are opened by an earthquake, at

¹ Acts xxiii. 11.

² Ibid. xxviii. 23.

³ Ibid. ix. 25.

⁴ Ver. 29, 30.

⁵ Ibid. xiii. 46.

⁶ Ibid. xiv. 19.

Philippi, till “the magistrates came and besought him to depart ;”¹ goes up to Jerusalem “bound in the Spirit,”² against the dissuasions of the prophets at Tyre,³ and of Agabus at Cæsarea, who foretold, that he should be bound by the Jews, and delivered to the Romans⁴ (“none of those things moving him”). He goes to Rome a second time, and runs into the mouth of the lion, after he had been delivered out of it, when it was necessary to discharge his apostolical trust. In all this, he shewed the greatest firmness of mind. Nor could any man possibly want a greater degree of courage and resolution than he, that was to be brought before Sanhedrims, Roman Governors, and the Roman Emperor or his Lientenant (when all deserted him),⁵ to answer for a doctrine, which was contrary to all men ; not only to the believing, but unbelieving Jews, proselytes, judaising and idolatrous Gentiles : yet he published it with a firmness and constancy, that was unshaken by all the terrors of life. And though it is said that he had “preached boldly at Damascus, and he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus at Jerusalem,”⁶ which was several years before the time that I think he commenced an apostle ; yet we are to consider, that he was “ordained

¹ Acts xvi. 25—40. ² Ibid. xix. 22. ³ Ibid. xx. 4.

⁴ Ibid. xxi. 11. ⁵ 2 Tim. iv. 16. ⁶ Acts ix. 27. 29.

to be an apostle from his mother's womb."¹ That consideration might perhaps remove this difficulty. But I think it is more material to say, that "boldly" should there rather be rendered "publicly," or "openly:" the sense, as I apprehend, being, that "he, who was certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus"² (namely, privately), at last began "to preach Christ in the synagogues;"³ and which Barnabas, when he comes to give an account of it to the apostles at Jerusalem,⁴ says, was "boldly," as we translate it; or, as I think it should be rendered, "openly;" and that "he, who was with the apostles going out and coming in,"⁵ that is, "living familiarly with them in private," now begins "to speak openly, in the name of the Lord Jesus."⁶ But I do not find this boldness is ascribed to any, but those who were, or at least were to be, apostles. Apollos indeed is said "to have spoke the word boldly."⁷ But I hope I have shewn, in the Second Essay, that it ought to be rendered "publicly," and not "boldly." The firmness and steadiness of St. Paul, under all his sufferings for the gospel is what he glories in himself. And so remarkable a degree as he had of it after the second

¹ Gal. i. 15. ² Ver. 19. ³ Ver. 20. ⁴ Ver. 27. ⁵ Ver. 28.

⁶ Ver. 29. See the Second Essay; and L'Enfant and Beausobre, in loc.

⁷ Acts xviii. 24.

time of his being at Jerusalem after his conversion, and after which his great sufferings began, seems to me to be a degree of it peculiar to an apostle.

3. Another sign of an apostle, was a power of "inflicting death" or grievous "bodily distempers" on obstinate offenders. Thus Peter struck Ananias and Sapphira dead. And though we do not find Paul ever struck any one dead, yet we find him sometimes inflicting bodily distempers; the power of inflicting which, he calls "his rod," or, "a rod committed to him for edification, and not for destruction."¹ Now, as we do not read that Paul ever used this rod before the time of his seeing Christ, at the second time of his being at Jerusalem; so we immediately read of his using it afterwards, striking Elymas the Jewish sorcerer blind, when he would have blinded the proconsul, or "perverted him from the right ways of the Lord."² And we hear much of this rod afterwards, in both his epistles to the Corinthians; where he orders a bold offender to be delivered "over to Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord;"³ and speaks of his being in a readiness "to revenge all the disobedience of a powerful

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 21. 2 Cor. x. 8. xiii. 10. ² Acts xiii. 11.

³ 1 Cor. v. 5.

faction" in that church, if they did not amend before he came again to them.¹

4. Another badge of this high office was the power of performing extraordinary cures, or of performing cures in an extraordinary manner; some of which, I think, St. Luke calls "special miracles,"² or miracles peculiar to an apostle. And thus we see that, after St. Paul's being the second time at Jerusalem after his conversion, he cures the cripple at Lystra,³ sends handkerchiefs from his body to perform cures at a distance,⁴ and raises Eutychus.⁵ But it is very observable, that he does none of all these extraordinary cures before the second time of his being at Jerusalem after his conversion; and that he begins to perform them presently after.

5. The greatest prerogative of all, and that which was most peculiar to an apostle, was the power of imparting the Holy Ghost. Now we never read of St. Paul's doing this before his being the second time at Jerusalem after his conversion. But after that, he immediately imparts the Holy Ghost to the first heathen converts at Antioch in Pisidia⁶ (if the Holy Ghost did not fall on them, as on the hundred and twenty at the be-

¹ 2 Cor. x. 6. 8. 11. xii. 20. xiii. 2—10.

² Acts xix. 11. ³ Ibid. xiv. 8. 11. ⁴ Ibid. x. 12.

⁵ Ibid. xx. 9—12. ⁶ Ibid. xiii. 52. Ann. 46.

ginning, without the laying on of hands, as I have observed was probable.¹ He imparts it to Timothy ;² to the Galatians ;³ to the Thessalonians on his first converting them ;⁴ to the Corinthians ;⁵ to the Ephesians ;⁶ and among others at Ephesus, to certain disciples of John,⁷ the second time of his coming there, about the latter end of the year 54.

VI. I must also add, that it is not till after St. Paul's being the second time at Jerusalem after his conversion, that we have any account of his exercising that singular power, which we have pretty plain hints of afterwards ; namely, of " seeing what was done in the churches under his care whilst he was at a distance," of which we have an instance.⁸ But I shall not insist on the instances themselves, having treated more fully of them in the Second Essay.

SECTION X.—*Other considerations which confirm this view of the time of St. Paul's apostleship.*

VII. It seems highly improbable to me, that Saul should have been known to be an apostle

¹ See the First Essay.

² Acts xvi. 3. 2 Tim. i. 6. Ann. 50.

³ Gal. iii. 2, 3. 5. Ann. 51. ⁴ 1 Thess. i. 5.

⁵ 1 Cor. i. 5. 7. 2 Cor. i. 22. xii. 12. Ann. 52.

⁶ Eph. i. 13. ⁷ Acts xix. 6.

⁸ Coloss. ii. 5. 1 Cor. v. 3, 4.

long before his being called so. Now he is never called an apostle till Acts xiv. 14; which was at Lystra, the third place at which St. Paul publicly exercised his apostolical office, and probably in a few weeks after he first exercised it in any assembly whatsoever. If he had publicly acted in this character long before, it is singular that St. Luke, so well acquainted with his story, and so very careful and exact in transmitting it, should never give it him till after his being separated in the church of Antioch to the work to which the Holy Ghost had called him.

VIII. It seems yet more improbable to me, that Saul should have been an apostle before that time, when at that very time, instead of being called an apostle, he is only called “a prophet, and a teacher.”¹ The offices of an apostle, a prophet, and a teacher, were too distinct in themselves, and St. Luke was too well acquainted with the great distinction between them, and too exact in these matters, to have ranked St. Paul among the prophets and teachers in the church of Antioch, if he had been an apostle at that time.

IX. It seems to me yet more improbable, that, if Saul had been an apostle at that time, he should have been named the last of the five.²

¹ Acts xiii. 1. ² Ibid.

Mr. Pyle seems to think this so wrong, that, in his Paraphrase, he corrects St. Luke in this particular, and puts Saul first, supposing him at that time to be an apostle. But, if St. Luke might not be thought competent to settle the rank between Barnabas and Saul, how comes he to place others before Paul, as well as Barnabas? And yet St. Luke is an accurate writer in this respect as well as all others. I believe we shall never find him put Silas after Timotheus, Silas being the elder and one of the leading men among the brethren; no more than Paul does in his epistles afterwards; which shews rank in Christianity was carefully attended to in the apostolic times.¹ And it is highly probable that the five mentioned in Acts xiii. 1, all of them prophets and teachers, are ranked according to their age and standing in Christianity; which if Mr. Pyle had happened to advert to, I believe it would have satisfied him with the place that St. Luke assigns to Saul among them in the Antiochian church, and prevented him from giving Saul the precedence against St. Luke's history.

X. I cannot but think it is the more probable that St. Paul did not commence an apostle till after the second time of his being at Jerusalem after his conversion, because he is never called

¹ 1 Thess. i. 1. 2 Thess. i. 1.

“ Paul ” till after that time ; but presently after, it is said, “ Saul, who is also called Paul.”^a Now, though it is most likely he had that name given him at his circumcision by his parents, as well as Saul ; Saul being the Jewish name, much used in the tribe of Benjamin, of which tribe Paul was ; and Paul his Roman name, being born at Tarsus, a Roman city ; and it being no uncommon thing to give two names : yet how comes it about, that he did not use his Roman name till ten years after his conversion, and till six years after his being the first time at Jerusalem ; but that, as before his duty had been among the Jews, among whom Saul sounded better than Paul, so now it was to be among the Gentiles, among whom Paul would sound better than Saul ? And after this, he never used any other. Origen was of opinion, that this was the reason of his using these different names at different times ; as may be seen in his Preface to the Epistle to the Romans.

XI. I think it also very remarkable, that Barnabas is always named before Saul by Luke, St. Paul’s companion, and very solicitous for his honour (as will appear to a careful reader of the Acts), till some little time after his being the second time at Jerusalem, and after his

^a Acts xiii. 9.

being declared to be an apostle in the church of Antioch. For it does not only stand thus, Acts xi. 30, and xiii. 2, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul;" but, ver. 1, the prophets in the church of Antioch are reckoned up in this order; 1. Barnabas, 2. Simeon, 3. Lucius, 4. Manaen, 5. Saul. If Saul had been known or declared to be an apostle before this time, he would probably have been first named. But, till he became an apostle, Barnabas was of a prior rank in the church; having been not only in the Lord before him, but in all probability one of the seventy, and an elder, or one of the hundred and twenty on whom the Holy Ghost descended at Pentecost without the intervention of hands (as I have endeavoured to prove in the Second Essay), which Saul was not; so that there was no reason to place Saul before Barnabas. But afterwards Luke places St. Paul generally first,¹ and represents him always as the speaker,² ἡγούμενος τοῦ λόγου. Though, Barnabas being an elder as well as an apostle, Luke does sometimes name him before St. Paul; even after St. Paul became an apostle.³ But I think there can be no reason given, why St. Luke, who gives Barnabas precedence, Acts xi. 30, and xiii. 1, should at any time after that give it Paul; but that Paul, who was

¹ Acts xiii. 13. 43. 46. xv. 39. ² Ibid. xiii. 16—44. xiv. 12.

³ Ibid. xiv. 14. xv. 12. 25.

not an apostle till a very little before, Acts xiii. 1, and who was not known to be an apostle till Acts xiii. 1, when he became one, or rather became known to be one.

XII. If it should be supposed, that St. Paul was made an apostle at his conversion, yet how can we, upon that supposition, account for Barnabas's being made an apostle of the Gentiles? That he was an apostle of the Gentiles, I have proved in the Second Essay. And since there cannot be any time fixed on for his being declared an apostle, but that mentioned in chap. xiii. of the Acts, and that he (as well as Paul) is called an apostle presently after, Acts xiv. 14, and never before; we must conclude that this was the time of his (as well as Paul's) commencing an apostle. Now, if he was declared the apostle of the Gentiles at that time, St. Paul must have been declared so, at that time too; for they were both ordered by the Spirit to be separated to the same work, to which they had been jointly called before; and to which they afterwards jointly went.

XIII. To confirm all that I have said, it appears, that St. Paul and Barnabas were never received and owned as apostles, by any of the other apostles, till the third time of St. Paul's being at Jerusalem, about the year 49; for then it was that "James, and Cephas, and John, and the chief of the Jewish apostles, gave them the right hand of fellowship, on perceiving the

grace that had been given them (that is, the favour of the revelation of the gospel he preached to the idolatrous Gentiles, and the success that had attended it), that he and Barnabas should go unto the heathen (that is, be the apostles of the Gentiles), and they unto the circumcision”¹ (that is, continue the apostle of the Jews). How could St. Paul be an apostle at the first or second time of his being at Jerusalem, and not be then known or owned as such by any of the apostles, and only be known and owned as such by the three chief apostles at the third time of his being there; that is, about eleven years after his being there the first time, and about six years after his being there the second? No man can with any reason suppose it.

This seems to me much the stronger, because St. Paul appeals to his being thus acknowledged as a fellow-apostle by the three chief apostles, against his adversaries; who, as I observed before, pretended, among other things against him, that he was not an apostle; or that, if he was one, he was but a kind of an apostle of a secondary order, deriving all his knowledge and authority from Peter and the rest of the twelve. Now can it be supposed that, when St. Paul was thus vindicating himself against these aspersions, he would not have carried up his apostleship, and his being owned as an apostle, as high as he could? Since therefore

¹ Gal. ii. 9.

he carries his being owned as an apostle no higher than the third time of his being at Jerusalem, it cannot be imagined that St. Paul was ever owned by them, or by any of the other twelve, as an apostle before; or that he would not have been owned before by the other twelve, if they had had a prior opportunity of owning him.

These reasons, vindicated from the exceptions that may be taken to them, convince me very fully, that St. Paul was not an apostle till after he saw Christ, at the second time of his being at Jerusalem after his conversion, ann. 43; and consequently, that he could not be an apostle at any time before.

SECTION XI.—*On the probability that St. Paul saw Christ on his first coming up to Jerusalem, after his conversion.*

If, after all, it should be objected, that the time of Christ's appearing to Saul, on his falling into a trance in the temple, was at his first (and not at his second) coming to Jerusalem, after his conversion; since he himself seems to intimate that he had this vision, "when he was come again to Jerusalem;"¹ and the time that he mentions of his being there before,² was the time just before his conversion: I answer, that as St. Paul merely intended at that time

¹ Acts xxii. 17.

² Ver. 5.

to shew that he had this vision at Jerusalem at a time after his being there to get letters from the Sanhedrim against the Christians ; and this made it unnecessary and improper for him to speak so minutely, as to the very precise time when he saw this vision, as to say whether it was the first or the second time of his being there after his conversion : it was altogether sufficient to say, that it was at some time of his being there after his seeing the glory of Christ on the road from Jerusalem to Damascus.

I think the history of St. Paul, set in this light, may account for what has been called his double ordination, though there is no just reason to call either of them so. In the first, the Holy Ghost, as I apprehend, fell upon him, ann. 35. On the receiving it, he preaches Christ to the Jews undoubtedly, that is, both Hebrew and Grecian, and perhaps to the proselytes of the gate also, after the year 41 ; a common thing for all that could do it, to do, without any ordination whatsoever : teaching being a duty in all that had abilities and inclinations, arising from the very light of nature, and the great law of charity, as things stood in the church, before the canon of the New Testament was completed and dispersed ; every one being bound in such a case to communicate truths of the utmost importance to others, who could not know them but by their means. Such teaching needs a commission or

an ordination no more, than teaching a secret how to cure the plague does in a country infected with it. A man that had such a secret would certainly communicate it, without staying for any commission whatsoever ; unless he desired to see nothing but death and desolation all about him. The love of our neighbour is God's sufficient general commission in that case.

But St. Paul did receive particular orders to go and teach. For he is said to be filled with the Holy Ghost at his first conversion ;¹ and I believe all that received the Holy Ghost did take that as a commission to exercise the gifts they had received, in Christian assemblies, women as well as men : how much more those that were filled with it ? as I believe no particular person is said to be that was not a prophet. I do not remember that that expression, when applied to any particular person, does ever denote any one under that degree ; and is often used concerning Zacharias and Elizabeth,² John Baptist,³ and Barnabas.⁴ And that Saul was a prophet and a teacher before he was an apostle, we expressly read : “ And there were certain prophets and teachers in the church of Antioch, as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had

¹ Acts ix. 17.² Luke i. 42. 67.³ Ver. 15.⁴ Acts x. 24.

been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.”¹ And St. Paul says, that when Christ, or the glory of Christ, appeared to him in the way to Damascus, that Christ said to him, “He appeared to him, to make him a minister and a witness, both of those things which thou hast seen, as well as of those in the which I will appear to thee.”²

SECTION XII.—*Consequences of St. Paul's preaching to the Jews and proselytes before he addressed the idolatrous Gentiles.—On his separation by the church at Antioch.—Conclusion.*

And in this, by the way, the wisdom of Providence deserves our notice. For by his being first a prophet and a teacher of the Christian faith to the Jews, and afterwards to the proselyted Gentiles, in all for about eight or nine years (in which time he was received and owned as such by the Jewish believers), the way was prepared for his becoming an apostle of the Gentiles, and many of those prejudices against him, and his office as the apostle of the Gentiles, were softened or removed; which might otherwise have operated much more strongly against him, in the minds of a people so bigoted to their own law, and so pre-

¹ Acts xiii. 1.

² Ibid. xxvi. 16.

possessed against the idolatrous Gentiles, as the Jewish believers were.

After he had been a prophet and a teacher about eight or nine years, he is sent “as an apostle to preach to the Gentiles” (that is, the idolatrous Gentiles), by Christ; from whom he had then a special commission, in a vision to himself, namely, the latter end of ann. 43; which he seems to hint to Timothy, when he tells him, that he was “appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.”¹

This commission was afterwards declared or notified to the church, by the prophets in the church of Antioch, the beginning of ann. 44; “Separate me Barnabas and Saul to the work to which I have called them;” agreeably to the words St. Paul says Christ used to him, saying, “Depart, for I will (namely, shortly at Antioch, not now) send thee far hence to the Gentiles:”² which notification has been supposed by some to be his second or his apostolical ordination, from some word used on this occasion; which I will consider presently. And the church fast and pray for a blessing on the particular work which he and Barnabas were going upon; and lay their hands on them. But, on both these occasions, he received his commission from Jesus Christ, either by the means of Ananias,

¹ 2 Tim. i. 11.

² Acts xxii. 21.

or of the Holy Ghost filling him with these gifts, to be a preacher ; and to be an apostle, immediately and personally from Christ, at the time of the vision in the temple ; as I have proved before. And let those who think an apostle must have any other ordination from men than this, namely, praying for a blessing (or, in other words, that he must have a conveyance of power from some other that had it), consider whether Ananias a disciple could ordain a preacher ; and prophets, men of an inferior order, could ordain an apostle, who was of the highest order in the church ?

What has led persons to think that this was an ordination of Paul and Barnabas is, that the terms are here used of “ separating, fasting, praying, laying on of hands, and sending them forth,” which are the circumstances that attend ordinations in modern times, and the expressions that are often used to denote them ; though I think little stress is laid on fasting, at least among some.

Now “ separating” signifies no more than either appointing a person to any particular work that God thinks fit to employ him about ; or to declare and publish him to be so appointed. So God called or separated Bezaliel and Aholiab to work all manner of work of the “ weaver, carver, engraver, embroiderer, and perfumer ;”¹

¹ Exod. xxxi. 2—12.

and afterwards Moses published it.¹ So also God separated the priests and Levites, the ark, the temple, and the utensils of both, for His service.

"Solemn prayer" was made by the church on divers important occasions. They prayed,² when nobody ordained Matthias; but he was chosen by the hundred and twenty, and appointed or ordained by God. They prayed,³ on the report that Peter and John made of their treatment by the high priest and rulers, after they had cured the lame beggar at the Beautiful gate of the temple. Prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for Peter, when Herod had put him in prison.⁴

As to "the laying on of hands," it was a ceremony that attended prayer or benediction, or other solemn actions. So Jacob blessed Ephraim and Manasseh.⁵ So the children of Israel laid their hands on the Levites, when they were to be separated to the service of Aaron and his sons.⁶ So our blessed Saviour, "when children were brought, that He should put his hands on them, and pray"⁷ (which shews that this was a common usage), He put His hands on them, and blessed them."⁸ Lay-

¹ Exod. xxxiv. 30—35. ² Acts i. 24. ³ Ibid. iv. 24.

⁴ Ibid. xii. 5. ⁵ Gen. xlviii. 14. ⁶ Numb. viii. 10.

⁷ Matt. xix. 13. ⁸ Ver. 15.

ing on of hands was so far from being a peculiar circumstance of ordination, or of any thing that had the least relation to it, that it was frequently used by our Saviour in healing. 'Thus it is said in Luke, that "He laid His hands on all the sick that were brought Him, and healed them."¹ Sometimes He did this by touching only.² And in the passage cited from St. Mark it may also be observed, from their desiring our Saviour to put His hand upon the deaf and dumb man, that it was a common practice in conferring great blessings, or in praying for them; and that touching was the same thing with laying on of hands: which may be likewise seen by our Saviour's touching the leper,³ and the blind man's eyes.⁴ And as our Saviour sometimes only touched the sick, so at other times He laid His hands on them;⁵ where the same thing is observable as I have remarked on Mar. vii. 32, 33; only with this difference, that Mar. viii. 22, they desire Christ to "touch the blind, and Christ lays His hands on him;" whereas in Mar. vii. 32, 33, being desired to "put His hands," He "touches him." So He also did Luke xiii. 13. And it was so usual a thing to

¹ Luke iv. 40.

² See Matt. viii. 3. Luke vii. 14. Matt. ix. 29. Mark vii. 32, 33.

³ Luke v. 12, 13. ⁴ Matt. xx. 32—34.

⁵ Mar. viii. 22, 23.

lay hands in order to heal, that our Saviour foretells, that "those that believe in His name, shall lay their hands on the sick, and that the sick shall recover."¹ And accordingly Ananias lays his hands on Paul, that he might receive his sight.² And Paul praying, and laying his hands on Publius's father, healed him.³ The apostles laid their hands on the seven deacons, when they had prayed, though they were chosen and appointed by the multitude.⁴ Farther; that laying on of hands was used in conferring the Holy Ghost, is plain from many places of Scripture.⁵ The sum of all this is, that "the laying on of hands" will not by any means necessarily denote ordination, since it denotes so many other things.

And that "sending forth" does not signify ordination, is plain from the following passages. The apostles, when they heard that the Samaritans had received the word of God, "sent unto them Peter and John."⁶ When the brethren knew that the Grecians went about to slay Saul; they "brought him down to Cesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus."⁷ When tidings came to the church which was at Jerusalem, of the great conversion of the Grecians at Antioch, they

¹ Mar. xvi. 18.

² Acts ix. 13. 17.

³ Ibid. xxviii. 8.

⁴ Ibid. vi. 1—7.

⁵ See the First and Second Essay.

⁶ Acts viii. 14.

⁷ Ibid. ix. 30.

“sent forth Barnabas,” who was a prophet, that he should go as far as Antioch.¹

Some have thought that the laying of hands on Barnabas and Saul was to give them the Holy Ghost; but that cannot be, because they are said to have “been full of the Holy Ghost”² long before.

And if we will allow the Scripture to explain itself, this “separating, fasting, praying, laying on of hands, and sending forth,” was neither ordination, nor conferring the Holy Ghost on them; but only a recommending them by the church to the grace of God. For we read, that “when Paul and Barnabas had fulfilled the work for which they had been sent forth, they returned to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God;”³ which with St. Luke, therefore, is an expression equivalent to “separating them by fasting, praying, laying on their hands, and sending them forth.”⁴ And this was a custom repeated by the church on a like solemn occasion. For, when Paul set out for Antioch with Silas, on his second peregrination, they were “recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God;”⁵ the very same expression which we just now observed St. Luke used, to denote the praying,

¹ Acts xi. 22.

² Ibid. ix. 17. xi. 24.

³ Ibid. xiv. 26.

⁴ Ibid. xiii. 2, 3.

⁵ Ibid. xv. 40.

fasting, and laying on of hands, and sending Barnabas and Saul ; ¹ and no doubt describes here the same actions on Paul and Silas, as it does on Barnabas and Saul.²

I cannot but think that St. Paul's story, as it has been here represented, lies in a natural and undisturbed order ; worthy and becoming the wisdom of Providence, in directing the remarkable steps of this great apostle, who must be allowed to have been freer from human imperfections, more highly favoured of God, and more serviceable to the recovering mankind to His faith and fear, and their own true happiness and salvation, than any man that ever lived in any age of the world. And I cannot but think, on the other hand, that, without this clue, St. Paul's history is extremely perplexed and intricate : for, if it be supposed that he was made an apostle at his first conversion, he was made an apostle without seeing the person of Christ, without receiving any apostolical commission, or the revelation of any doctrine from Him ; much less of the gospel that he was to preach to the idolatrous Gentiles ; or without being sent to those Gentiles, of whom alone he was the apostle ; without preaching to them till at least ten years after he was their apostle ; and without testifying, or exercising any of the powers

¹ Acts xiii. 3.

² Ver. 2, 3.

peculiar to an apostle, in all that time. He must on this hypothesis likewise be supposed to have seen the other apostles at Jerusalem, without communicating to any of them his character, the doctrine he preached, or the success he met with ; nay, and without being owned by them as such ; or so much as received the first time by them even as a disciple, till they were certified by Barnabas that he was one, though that was three years after his conversion. It must likewise on this supposition have been about ten years after his being an apostle, before he was ever styled an apostle ; and that during all that time he was only styled a prophet and a teacher, and before he was called Paul, the name he used on his being the apostle of the Gentiles : and we must also suppose him, though an apostle, to have been placed after Barnabas (who was no apostle at that time, and three others who never were apostles), by St. Luke, the great friend and companion of St. Paul ; and to have been sought out by Barnabas, and in some measure advised and directed by him, where to go, and what to do, in the discharge of his apostolical office. Each of these suppositions is load enough to sink the hypothesis of Paul's being an apostle at his first conversion, much more all of them put together ; and most of them are in a great measure as much against the supposition


of his being made an apostle at the first time of his being at Jerusalem after his conversion.

Besides, if he was an apostle before the second time of his being at Jerusalem, what can be the meaning of Christ's sending him at that time to the Gentiles, to whom, upon this supposition, he was sent before? What was the work to which the Spirit, in the mouth of the prophets of the church of Antioch, said He had called him, and to which he was then solemnly to be separated; and to which Mark, who went with them as far as Perga in Pamphylia, would not go? When was Barnabas declared to be an apostle of the Gentiles, if not at this time? And if he was at this time, how could Paul, who was called jointly with him, be called at any other? How came they then to go to the idolatrous Gentiles, if he or they had been with them before? And how came he, after going to them, and returning to the same church, to rehearse how God had opened the door of faith to those very Gentiles? How comes St. Paul then immediately to exercise all the apostolical powers among them, and afterwards to return to the same churches, and go on further among the Gentiles; and at last, after this, to write several epistles to them; without our ever hearing the least word of all this concerning him before? And how comes he, only the third time of his being at Jerusalem (that is, four or five years

after his second time of being there, or, which is the same thing, of seeing this vision first), to have communicated the gospel of the Gentiles to Peter, James, and John, and to them but privately ; and to have been then, together with Barnabas, first received and owned at Jerusalem, by those pillars of the church, as a fellow-apostle ?

ESSAY IV.

ON THE UNANIMOUS JUDGMENT, OR EPISTLE,
OF THE APOSTLES, ELDERS, AND BRETHREN
AT JERUSALEM, TO THE BRETHREN OF THE
GENTILES IN ANTIOCH, SYRIA, AND CILICIA;
ABOUT THEIR ABSTAINING FROM THINGS
OFFERED TO IDOLS, FROM BLOOD, FROM
THINGS STRANGLED, AND FROM FORNICA-
TION.¹



SECTION I.—*On the various opinions concerning the
apostolical decree.—Design of this Essay.*

IN a former Essay, I endeavoured to explain what is meant by the apostles, elders, and brethren, who assembled together to make the decree, in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles; and the nature and form of that decree. I will here endeavour to explain briefly its matter and substance; and then shew, more at large, to whom it was addressed.

¹ Acts xv. 23—30. See the “Arrangement of the New Testament,” vol. ii. p. 181—186.

I choose to do it the rather, because many serious Christians and learned divines entertain scruples from this decree, which seem to me to be altogether unnecessary, and are very troublesome in private life ; especially as the way of eating is now ordered in all the countries of Europe. And as many serious Christians are full of scruples on this head, so the more learned have been always extremely divided in their sentiments of the way by which these scruples should be removed ; without any of them, in my opinion, having hit on the right. Others have taken occasion from this decree to make great exceptions to the Christian religion itself ; as neither giving us the liberty, from the laws of Moses, that it pretends, or that reason itself would indulge ; and that consequently it neither is that free or reasonable service that its votaries have represented it to be. So that this decree has been thought a law binding all Christians, and at all times, by some ; and only binding all Christians for some time, and under certain circumstances, by others. Some also have thought all these things unlawful in their own nature ; and others have taken an handle from hence to represent them all as indifferent : whilst the enemies of Christianity have endeavoured to represent this decree, not only as unworthy of Christianity, by forbidding things indifferent ;

but have endeavoured to turn it into ridicule, for mixing the prohibition of things in their own nature indifferent, with the prohibition of things in their own nature unlawful. So singularly unhappy has this decree been above all other parts of Scripture; and so entirely have the divines, and indeed the Greek and Latin churches, been divided about it.

On the other hand, I hope to shew, that this decree is so far from binding all Christians at all times, or all Christians under certain circumstances for some time; that it never related to any Christians but such as became converts to Christianity from having been proselytes of the gate, and to them only whilst the Jewish polity lasted: and therefore that it has abridged the other Gentile Christians of none of that liberty which reason and the gospel ever pretended to give; that it contains no precepts of an heterogeneous nature to those to whom it was addressed; nor gives the least handle to Christians now, to think the matters forbidden in this decree to be either all of them unlawful, or all of them indifferent. If the interpretation I shall advance will answer what I here propose, it will have advantages that no other scheme has which I have yet met with. For though Dr. Spencer has written on this subject with more learning and invention than any other, and has

been since generally followed by the ablest divines ; yet I think he has left it in the state, he says, he found it, when he tells us, “*Quod theologi plerique omnes in eo explicando conatu irrito laborasse, et difficultates in eo contentas non tam solvisse, quam evitasse, videantur.*”¹ Which assertion he endeavours afterwards to prove,² of the five most celebrated hypotheses of divines about it.

However, if this learned man has mistaken the persons to whom the letter that contains this decree is addressed, by which he has been led into an entire mistake of the grounds and reasons on which it went, and of the meaning of several passages in the chapter where it occurs ; yet he has with great learning and judgment explained the matter and substance of it. So that he has not only removed the rubbish (which encumbered this decree) with great labour and skill ; but has laid a solid foundation to build on ; unhappy as, in my opinion, he himself has been in raising the superstructure. I entirely concur with him in the explication he gives of the parts of this decree. I shall, therefore, but just mention what I understand by them, and refer the reader to his learned dissertation for a fuller explication and proof of the meaning of

¹ In Pref. Dissert. in loc. in Lib. de Leg. Heb. Rit. p. 471. Edit. Cant.

² Cap. ii.

them. And, indeed, it were to be wished, that every one who makes the Bible his study would not only read this dissertation, but his incomparable book : where, if a little indulgence be given to the stiffness that prevailed in the time when he wrote, and to some favourite opinions, the reader will find nothing to distaste him ; and an immense treasure of learning, mixed with a great deal of wit and judgment, disposed in a neat and accurate manner, and expressed with all the clearness, life, and elegance imaginable, for his instruction and entertainment.

By “things offered to idols,” I then understand any meat or drink devoted or offered to an image or idol ; but especially such as had been offered to an idol in the idol’s temple.

By “blood,” I mean the blood separated from the flesh (which was generally done in the greater beasts only ; such as sheep, oxen, lambs, goats, kids, &c.), either drunk by itself, or mingled with other liquors, or mixed up with flour, spice, &c.

By “things strangled,” I understand creatures strangled or suffocated with design to keep the blood in them, in order to be eaten ; which generally was used in fowl, birds, and game ; such as hares, rabbits, &c. : and I suppose every animal was understood to be strangled which was not slain in such a manner as “to

have his blood poured out," as it is ordered in Leviticus.¹ The Cambridge copy has not "things strangled," and one or two of the fathers quote the text with that omission; yet that it is a part of the text is very well proved by Dr. Gale² (against Dr. Mill in his *Prolegomena*). And,

By "fornication," I understand uncleanness of any sort (which is the true sense of the word *πορνεία*), and which was practised in every kind by the heathens, as part of the worship performed to their idols; even in the very worst instances of those abominations which are mentioned in Leviticus.³

I have described things strangled, as strangled with design to keep the blood in them, that I might exclude things dying of themselves, or things torn, because it is plain that Moses distinguishes them from things strangled (as is very justly observed by Dr. Spencer); not only allowing the Israelites to give them to the proselytes of the gate (who might consequently eat them), or sell them to an alien;⁴ but forbidding the Israelites, and the proselytes of righteousness, to eat them (not under the penalty of being cut off, as he does the four that I have

¹ Lev. xvii. 13.

² In his *Sermons*, vol. iv. p. 183—187, and p. 203, 204.

³ Acts xviii.

⁴ Deut. xiv. 21.

mentioned; but) only under the small penalty of "being unclean till he had washed himself, and till the even."¹

By "proselytes of the gate," I understand Gentiles by birth, who quitted the heathen idolatry, but did not embrace the Jewish religion; and who, on account of quitting paganism, were permitted to dwell in Palestine; and had several civil privileges allowed them, and liberty to join in all acts of worship that were in use before the law (or that were of patriarchal right and usage, and were not peculiar to the Jews), whilst they dwelt or sojourned in Palestine: on condition only of observing the laws of society, and such laws of Moses as related particularly to themselves, and which were these four just now mentioned. For though, as Selden proves beyond contradiction, more than this was necessary to make a man a proselyte of the gate, when the Jews were an independent government in flourishing circumstances (particularly their being admitted as such by one of their inferior courts, and other agreements which they held them to); yet they considered all those as proselytes of the gate, who worshipped the true God, and abstained from these four things, when they came to be more under the power of others.²

¹ Lev. xvii. 15.

² Seld. de Jur. Nat. ap. Heb. l. ii. c. 3, 4. l. iii. c. 5. 10.

SECTION II.—*The apostolical decree was not intended for the proselytes of the gate.*

That these four prohibitions were given by Moses to the proselytes of the gate, and at one time and place, will appear from the xviith and xviith chapters of Leviticus. And in this I have Dr. Spencer with me.' The "eating things offered to idols" is forbidden in the xviith chapter, from the first verse to the eighth; where great care is taken, lest the children of Israel should eat of any of the sacrifices or offerings unto devils or false gods; by commanding them to eat of no flesh (that was allowed to be offered in sacrifice) whose blood was not first offered to the God of Israel, at the door of His tabernacle: the heathens not eating any meat that had not been offered to devils or false gods, some way or other; and that, they thought, they did, if they either shewed it to their gods, or offered them all the blood or any part of it. Now, that the Israelites might not either use this idolatrous rite themselves, or eat of any beast that had been thus offered; they were ordered to kill no beast in the field, that they designed to eat, but to slay it at the door of the tabernacle, and offer the blood to God; whereby the eating of any thing offered to an

¹ Cap. 3. Dissert. in loc. §. 4. vers. fin. p. 503.

idol was most effectually prevented : since by this means they could eat nothing that had not been first offered to God. And then, as the eating things offered to idols is forbidden the Israelites, and the method which is to prevent it thus enjoined them, from the first to the eighth verse ; so it is forbidden the proselytes of the gate, from the eighth to the tenth. I must desire the reader to peruse the fourth section of the third chapter of Spencer's dissertation on this subject, and the first section of the eleventh chapter of his second book "*De Leg. Hebr. Rit.*" However, though Grotius, as well as Spencer, is of opinion, that the eighth and ninth verses are meant of a proselyte of the gate ; yet most interpreters think they are meant of a proselyte of righteousness : among which is Dr. Patrick, the late Bishop of Ely, whose learned Commentary is so generally esteemed.¹ But I think to suppose the eighth and ninth verses to relate only to a proselyte of righteousness, is making the law contained in these verses a needless repetition : since the general law, that says, "one law shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you,"² would have entirely superseded this repetition, and made it altogether unnecessary.

¹ See Patr. in loc.² *Exod.* xii. 49.

“Blood” is expressly forbidden to the proselytes of the gate, as well as to the Israelites, from the tenth verse to the thirteenth.

“Things strangled” are as expressly forbidden to the proselytes of the gate as to the Israelites, in the thirteenth verse. For there the blood of any fowl or beast, that was caught in hunting, is forbidden to be eat in it; and is ordered to be poured on the ground, and covered with the dust. And that this relates to the eating of the fowl or beast (with the blood in it, or strangled) is plain, because these are the creatures that used to be strangled, as partridges, hares, &c.; and because it immediately follows the prohibition of eating blood. For, unless this prohibition be understood of blood kept in the body of the beast or fowl, it is but the self-same prohibition with that in the former verse: which cannot be supposed.

“Fornication,” or uncleanness of all sorts, or all abominations or abominable customs of the nations, by which they might defile themselves either after the manners of Egypt or Canaan, that is, all kinds of uncleanness, are forbidden the proselytes of the gate, chap. xviii., from the first verse to the end of the chapter. In this too I have Spencer with me. The 26th verse is express to this purpose: “Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and shall not commit any of these abominations, neither any of your own

nation (that is, neither an Israelite born, nor a proselyte of righteousness, who becomes one of your nation, and for whom there is but one law with the Jew), nor the stranger that sojourneth among you" (that is, the proselyte of the gate). And the reason that is given in the 27th and 28th verses, why neither any of the Jewish nation, nor the stranger that sojourneth among them, should commit any of these abominations, is, "for all these abominations have the men of the land done which were before you, and the land is defiled. That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it; as it spued out the nations that were before you." Now if all the uncleanness and abominations forbidden in the former part of the chapter were unlawful even to the nations that inhabited Canaan; how much more must they have been so to the strangers that sojourned among them? and therefore, if any of them did commit any of these abominations, they "were to be cut off."¹

The proselytes of the gate were, no doubt, forbidden other things by the law of Moses: yet they were such as the law of nature forbad too; as idolatry, theft, murder, adultery, false witness, &c., and which could not be committed without the most manifest injury to society, or at least that form of it that was settled among

¹ Exodus xii. 29.

the Jews. But as these could admit of no debate among the enquirers at Antioch ; so there could be no room for a question or answer concerning them. And it is true too, that the proselytes of the gate were to abstain from many other things, that were no more unlawful in themselves than things strangled and blood. Yet that was not by Moses's law, but by usage and custom, or by agreements of the Jewish government with them, when that government was in flourishing circumstances ; which it was very far from being at this time. Mr. Selden, according to his particular dialect, mentions these things as forbidden them, "*nec jure naturali, nec jure gentium imperativo, sed interveniente.*"¹

Perhaps there were some other things forbidden or enjoined them by the law of Moses itself, that were of the same class ; but then it was whilst they were in Palestine : as, putting leaven out of their houses in the time of unleavened bread ; and it may be, one or two more of the like kind. But none of these could occasion a question, or debate, among proselytes living in Syria and Cilicia, out of the Holy Land. And though I am of opinion with Spencer, that a proselyte of the gate was enjoined to keep the Sabbath by the fourth commandment, for the

¹ Seld. de Jur. Nat. Heb. lib. ii.

reasons which he gives ;¹ yet I cannot but agree with him, and Selden too, that the Jews, at and before our Saviour's time, were so far from thinking proselytes of the gate bound to keep the Sabbath, that they punished them severely if they did ;² so that there could be no room for question, debate, or advice, about the proselytes of the gate keeping the Sabbath, though they were enjoined to observe it by the fourth commandment.

However, as my hypothesis supposes things offered to idols, blood, things strangled, and fornication, to have been expressly forbidden by Moses to the proselytes of the gate ; I must desire my reader to peruse a paraphrase and notes on the xviith chapter of Leviticus (which I have annexed by way of Appendix) before he goes any farther ; where I take three of these prohibitions to be contained. As to the fourth, namely, fornication, which is contained in the xviith chapter, it is so expressly forbidden to the stranger that sojourned among them, that I believe what I have said of that already will be sufficient. Origen (who was best acquainted with Jewish learning of any of the fathers) was of this opinion ; and expressly says, “ you see, therefore, that the law of abstaining from blood, which was given in common to the children of

¹ Lib. i. § 12.

² Selden. Spencer, *ibid.*

Israel, and to the strangers," &c. I quote him only to this purpose, knowing that he, as well as other of the fathers, was against any Christians eating any of the four things prohibited in this decree,¹ of which I shall say something towards the close of this Essay. I have given this paraphrase of the xviith chapter the rather, because I find the learned Dr. Patrick, late Bishop of Ely, to have been of a different opinion, in his Commentary on this place. And though I think Mr. Pyle comes nearer to the sense of this chapter, in his late excellent Paraphrase on the Pentateuch, yet I apprehend he has not exactly hit it; especially in some of the verses. Whether I have been more fortunate, I must leave to the reader to judge, after he has considered the notes by which I endeavour to support the sense I have given to the chapter in my paraphrase. For I think a paraphrase of such unconnected laws, given in the early ages of the world, and translated from a dead language, cannot support itself by a bare reference to the text; without the assistance of notes, to prove that to be the true meaning of the text, which the paraphrase represents to be contained in it.

Perhaps some may enquire, why Moses should forbid these four expressly to the pro-

¹ Orig. in Matt. xv.

selytes of the gate. And since the giving an answer to this question may be of some use in our enquiry, though it does not fall so directly under it ; my opinion is, that they were forbidden them, as the things that were at that time the chief enticement, concomitants, or symptoms, of idolatry. Now as renouncing idolatry, and worshipping the one true God, was the only reason why any could justly desire the privilege of being a proselyte of the gate, and the only reason why the Jews should grant it (for they were not to suffer an idolater to live, he being guilty of high-treason under a theocracy) ; so Moses expressly forbid them these things, as what used chiefly to accompany idolaters, or tempt them, or the Israelites among whom they were to live, actually to become guilty of that crime. If Spencer's dissertation on this place of Scripture be read with this view, it may, in my opinion, be read with great use ; especially the third chapter : for what he there assigns (groundless in my apprehension) as the reasons why the council forbid these things to the Christians, are, I believe, the true reasons why Moses forbid them to the proselytes of the gate.

SECTION III.—*The apostolical decree was designed for those converts to Christianity, who had previously been proselytes of the gate.*

Having thus explained all the terms of the decree, I shall endeavour to prove that it related only to such as were converted to Christianity from first being proselytes of the gate. And I think that may be fully proved from the following considerations :

I. From the place where the question arose that gave occasion to the decree ; Antioch in Syria, the first Christian church of proselytes of the gate. That there was a famous Jewish university in this city, and that it was full of Jews, and of proselytes of the gate, we learn from Josephus,¹ and the Roman laws.² And indeed these proselytes of the gate were very numerous in most of the places where there were Jews ; and comprehended most of the sober and well-disposed Gentiles in those parts ; who did not go over entirely to the Jewish religion, and who were comparatively but few, because of the difficulty of circumcision, and the other terms they must submit to ; whereas it could scarce happen that well-disposed men should make much scruple of becoming prose-

¹ Joseph. de Bell. Judaic. lib. vii. cap. 3. § 3.

² See Grot. in Proleg. ad Luc.

lytes of the gate, when they could have hopes of future happiness on so easy terms as worshipping the true God only, and abstaining from these four things; whereas no false God at that time gave any hopes of the reward of the life to come: so that it is no wonder, as the learned and sagacious Mr. Jo. Mede observes,' "that there were so many proselytes of the gate in the several countries where the Jews were dispersed." These proselytes of the gate had been first converted to Christianity by the men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who were among those that were dispersed on the first persecution that ensued upon St. Stephen's martyrdom, and are called Grecians.² It should be read *Ἑλληνας*, and not *Ἑλληνιστὰς*, and should have been rendered Gentiles, not Grecians.³ And that they were devout Gentiles, is farther evident from this phrase, that, on the preaching of the men of Cyprus and Cyrene, they are said "to turn unto the Lord,"⁴ being turned unto God already, as we shall shew in the course of this Essay. This is the more probable from the Greek phrase used about them,⁵ which is not *λαὸς ἱκανὸς*, but *ὄχλος ἱκανὸς προσετέθη τῷ Κυρίῳ*. And now *ὄχλος* is the word St. Luke often uses concerning a multitude, or any very great

² See his *Diatr.* p. 22. Lond. Ed. ² Acts xi. 20.

³ See the Abstract. ⁴ Acts xi. 21. ⁵ Ver. 24.

number, as may be seen in the Acts.¹ I confess St. Luke in the Acts uses this word (ὄχλος), in conjunction with some other word, of a riotous multitude or assembly of Jews, or to signify a number or a company of any sort; but I think his avoiding the word λαός, not in a good sense here, and his using the word ὄχλος here, which is never applied by him or any other sacred writer of the New Testament to any but Jews, or to the Gentiles when spoken of under the notion of a people that God took to Himself as he did the Jews, or instead of the Jews, gives a great countenance to the opinion, that these were not Jews, but devout Gentiles. He that will consult the places where the word λαός is used in the New Testament, will not have much doubt of the truth of this criticism upon it. I farther observe, that no word is so much opposed to Ἰουδαίους, as Ἕλληνας. Instances are numerous in the Acts, as well as the Epistles. Nor are Ἑλληνισταὶ opposed to Ἰουδαίους, but Ἑβραίους.² This may farther serve to shew that Ἕλληνας is the true reading here. These are taken notice of by St. Luke, as the great harvest of the proselyte converts, that ensued on the conversion of Cornelius and his family, who were the first-fruits of these Gentiles.

This reading and version restores good sense

¹ Acts xiii. 45. xiv. 11. 13, 14. 18, 19. xvi. 22. xvii. 8. 13. xix. 26. 33. 35. ² Ibid. vi. 1.

and order to St. Luke's history, and force to his remark. For then it stands thus : " Having entered on the history of the conversion of the proselytes of the gate, in the account of Cornelius and his family ;¹ and having given an account of the expostulation of those that were of the circumcision with him on that account² of Peter's justification ;³ and of their acquiescence, on seeing plainly that God had then granted, or begun to grant, repentance unto life unto the Gentiles (that is, the proselytes of the gate⁴), immediately adds,⁵ that upon this, though they that were scattered abroad upon Stephen's persecution had hitherto only preached to the Jews, notwithstanding that they had travelled as far as Phœnice, and Cyprus, and Antioch (some of which were men of Cyprus and Cyrene); yet, on the occasion of the former transaction, in relation to Cornelius and his family, and the acquiescence of the whole church at Jerusalem in it, they being at Antioch, now begin to speak unto the Gentiles" (that is, the same sort of Gentiles that had been discoursed of in all this and the preceding chapter; that is, proselytes of the gate). But where is the order of St. Luke's history, if *Ἑλληνιστὰς*, Grecians, be the true reading ; since his history will then go backward, and, after giving an

¹ Acts x.

² Ibid. xi. 1—4.

³ Ver. 4—18.

⁴ Ver. 18.

⁵ Ver. 19.

account of the conversion of proselyted Gentiles, return to the history of the conversion of Hellenist Jews? and how will Grecians, that is, Hellenist Jews, or Jews that spoke Greek, or Jews that used no other tongue but the Greek, and Jews by proselytism (in one of which senses the Grecians or Hellenists must be taken), stand opposed to Jews? ¹ Will it be good sense to say, “that the men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who had in their travels, as far as Antioch, spoken hitherto to none but the Jews only, spoke now to the Jews?” or would it be of any moment for St. Luke to have said, “that they, who before had spoken to Jews that used the Hebrew as their mother tongue, now first spoke to Jews that used the Greek;” or, “that they who had spoken before to such as were Jews by conversion,² now spake to Jews by religion;” if that was true, as it is not? or where will be the force of the remark that is plainly introduced on the story of the conversion of Cornelius, and which, according to the common reading and our version, must be this; namely, “that thereupon the men of Cyprus and Cyrene converted Hellenist Jews, who had been converted before in great multitudes?”³ So that we may be fully assured, that *Ἑλληνας*, Gentiles, is the true reading and rendering of the place.

¹ Acts xi. 19.² Ibid.³ Ibid. vi. 1.

Upon the news of the success which the men of Cyprus and Cyrene had met with among these proselytes of the gate at Antioch being brought to the ears of the apostles, who continued at Jerusalem (notwithstanding the persecution, to look out and consult for the good of the church), they, according to their usual vigilance, send Barnabas thither ; a man peculiarly suited to exhort these people, being not only “ a prophet,”¹ but “ a good man (*ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός*, that is, a man of a sweet and benign temper, not likely to lay greater burdens on the proselyte converts than were necessary), and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith.”² He, finding more business among them than he could go through, goes to Tarsus, to find Saul ; and bringing him with him to Antioch, they for a whole year taught much people there, that is, great numbers of proselytes of the gate. Insomuch that, taking the name of “ brethren” upon them, which they did not know whether the Jewish Christians, who took the name of brethren to themselves,³ would allow them, considering their prejudices against them, whom they treated as strangers ; they take a new name, namely, that of “ Christians,”⁴ from Christ their great Master, according to the

¹ Acts xiii. 1.² Ibid. xi. 23, 24.³ Ver. 1.⁴ Ver. 26.

Greek custom, as we see was the case in Pythagoreans, Platonists, Aristotelians, and Epicureans, &c. And perhaps with an allusion to "the unction," which Cornelius and his family, the first-fruits of these proselytes at Cesarea, had received from Christ, whom, St. Peter says in his discourse to them, "God anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with power."¹ Some think this new name of Christians, which these proselytes of the gate converted to Christianity took, was agreeable to the prophecy of Isaiah.² But, notwithstanding their taking this new name at the first, yet afterwards the appellation of "brethren" is given them by the church of Jerusalem, on a full consideration of their case.³ And it is highly probable there were no Jewish converts in this church, not only from this consideration, that they never seem to have been troubled with the question about the necessity of circumcision by any among themselves, but were perfectly at quiet till the Jewish false brethren from Jerusalem came among them.⁴

And as we do not read of any Jewish converts in this church, so we never read of any idolatrous Gentiles converted here; either before Barnabas and Saul were sent on this work

¹ Acts x. 38.² Isaiah lxx. 15.³ Acts xv. 23.⁴ Ver. 1.

of converting the Gentiles, when to be sure no idolatrous Gentiles had been converted,¹ nor after their return to this church from that work. Nor indeed do we then hear of their converting any : but only of their abiding “long time with the disciples,” instructing them that were already disciples or Christians more fully in the doctrines of Christ.²

SECTION IV.—*The church of Antioch was principally composed of proselytes of the gate.—Its peculiar fitness to be the principal church of the Christians next to that of Jerusalem.*

And indeed this church seems to me, to have been at first designed by God, in His providence, and continued all along, as a church made up of proselytes of the gate, to prepare Paul and Barnabas for preaching to the idolatrous Gentiles, as well as the Jewish Christians for receiving the news of whole churches being made up of such as had been idolatrous Gentiles (which was very surprising, if not shocking, to many of them at first, and especially to understand that they were to receive them in the Lord); and to be in some sort, if I may so express it, the mother church of the idolatrous Gentiles, as Jerusalem was of the Jews : for, as

¹ Acts xiv. 7. See Essay III.

² Ver. 28.

the apostles and apostolic men were sent from the church of Jerusalem to convert Jews, Samaritans, and proselytes of the gate, to which afterwards they return to give an account of their success ; so were the apostles Barnabas and Saul sent on their first peregrination by the church of Antioch, to convert the idolatrous Gentiles to the faith ;¹ and return thither at the end of it, and “rehearse all that God had done with them.”² So likewise Paul and Silas are sent out by the same church, on Paul’s second peregrination³ (and perhaps Barnabas and Mark too).⁴ And at the end of this second peregrination, they “went to Antioch, and spent some time there,”⁵ not barely to stay with their Christian friends, but in all likelihood to rehearse what God had done with them in this second peregrination ; as they had done in the first. From hence Paul likewise departs on his third peregrination ;⁶ and in all probability recommended by the church to the grace of God, as in the two former. And as it is highly probable that, after Paul’s first imprisonment at Rome, he came to Jerusalem ;⁷ so it is very probable he might from thence go to Antioch, as he did every other time he went up to Jeru-

¹ Acts xiii. 2, 3. 5.² Ibid. xiv. 26, 27.³ Ibid. xv. 40.⁴ Ver. 39.⁵ Ibid. xviii. 22, 23.⁶ Ibid.⁷ Heb. xiii. 19. 23.

saalem after commencing an apostle ; and might from thence probably set out on that fifth peregrination, which, as we gather from other places of Scripture, he went upon ; though St. Luke does not carry the history of St. Paul so far.¹ And if these were the designs of Providence in settling this church, as a church of devout Gentiles converted to Christianity, Antioch must be allowed to be a city extremely well suited to that design ; it being a city of Syria, a country that was thought by the Jews to be a sort of middle nature, between the holiness which they ascribed to Palestine, and the pollution of other countries ; and being, like the proselytes of the gate, neither altogether holy nor profane ;² and consequently a region fit for a great church of the proselytes of the gate converted to the faith.

From all these considerations, it appears that the church at Antioch was a church composed of proselytes of the gate ; and that therefore the question and decree must relate to proselytes of the gate who were become Christians.

II. This accounts for the rise of the question. For it does not seem probable that any of the Jews should first of all pretend, that idolatrous Gentiles, out of Palestine, and that never dwelt

¹ See the Abstract.

² See Reland's *Secret Antiquities of the Hebrews*.

or sojourned in it, though converted to Christianity, should be bound by Moses's law, who never thought it extended beyond the Jews (that is, Jews born, or such as would become Jews), or such as would live or sojourn in Palestine, and were entitled to certain privileges when they lived or sojourned there. On which account we do not find the zealots among the Jewish Christians¹ concerned at all at what Paul had taught the Gentiles; but only at what they thought he had taught "the Jews that were among the Gentiles." But, considering the notions they then had, it might easily come into their heads, that the proselytes of the gate, who were never admitted to live or sojourn in Palestine without submitting to some of the laws of Moses, nor to a full communion with the church of the Jews without submitting to all those laws, should not be admitted to a full communion with the Christian church, and themselves as a part of it, but on the same terms. This ran in all their heads, on St. Peter's first converting Cornelius and his family. For St. Luke tells us, they said to Peter, "thou wentest in unto men uncircumcised," that is, proselytes of the gate. And notwithstanding Peter had satisfied them all for the present, yet this notion was apt to recur among some of

¹ Acts xxi. 20, 21.

them. And though perhaps they might carry this matter farther, and make this afterwards a question about the idolatrous Gentiles, in the second instance ; yet it is not likely that they made it one about them in the first. Error, like vice, grows and is fruitful. A less error, like a smaller fault, will lead men into greater. But people do not usually at once run into the greatest vices or absurdities. And indeed I have some doubt, whether the zealots ever insisted on the necessity of the idolatrous Gentiles observing the laws of Moses, as they did in relation to the proselytes of the gate. I rather believe, they endeavoured by artifices from false philosophy, and by an address to their fears and sensual pleasures, to entice and draw them into a compliance with it. This at least appears to me on an attentive reading of the first epistle to the Corinthians ; and I think may be pretty obvious to any one, on reading the sixth chapter of the epistle to the Galatians.¹

III. This is the more probable from the persons that moved the question at Antioch, “some of the sect of the Pharisees that believed.” Such at least were those who abetted them at Jerusalem,² and most likely some of the very zealots of that zealous sect. Their constant opinion was, that no persons should

¹ Ver. 12, 13.

² Acts xv. 5.

be admitted to live quietly among them on the bare terms of proselytism ; much less be admitted to be Jews, without fully embracing their religion, and being circumcised ; as may be seen, on two great occasions, in Josephus ;¹ whilst others thought much less would do. So that it appears, from the very persons that moved the question, as well as the place where it was moved, that this in all probability was the question now first moved in the Christian church ; namely, whether the proselytes of the gate, who, as the zealots pretended, could not so much as live among them, much less be thought Jews, without circumcision, could ever be allowed to be a part of the church of Christ without it ? And because the Holy Ghost had given a full decision in the case of Cornelius, that they ought (as we shall see more fully presently) ; therefore these men come with a pretended authority from the apostles, elders, and brethren at Jerusalem ; not putting it on the merit of the cause, after such a full decision by the Holy Ghost to the contrary ; but on a pretended new revelation, made since to the apostles at Jerusalem, and now brought by them as messengers of the church of Jerusalem to the church of Antioch. Every one will see,

¹ Antiq. l. xx. c. 2. Vit. Joseph. p. 1007. B. p. 1010. C. And Selden de Jur.

that this must have been naturally the first question that these zealots at Jerusalem were like to stir in the church, whatever question they might from thence raise afterwards in relation to the idolatrous Gentiles, when they became acquainted with the news of their conversion.

So that this hypothesis accounts well for the rise of the question; whether we consider the question itself, the persons who moved it, and the place where, and consequently the persons about whom, it was moved.

SECTION V.—*The opinion, that the decree referred to those Christians only in the Church at Antioch, who had been proselytes of the gate, is confirmed by its agreement with various circumstances.*

IV. This hypothesis alone agrees with several things that occur in the debate.

1. With St. Peter's argument, which is entirely taken from the proselyted (not from the idolatrous) Gentiles converted to Christianity. For his argument is this: "God, in the case of Cornelius (the only case referred to in Peter's speech), has borne witness to the proselytes of the gate, or declared them acceptable to Him upon the terms of proselytism (that is, the ob-

servance of these four precepts, though they did not observe any of the other laws of Moses), by giving them the Holy Ghost at Cesarea, as He did to us at the beginning, without any difference; thereby shewing that He had purified their hearts by faith, whom we all used to think unclean, and whom you zealots still continue to think so: therefore let those terms, and no more, be required of the proselytes of the gate converted to Christianity at Antioch," &c.¹ Here the conclusion is well drawn from the premises. But it would be no argument to say, "The Holy Ghost, or God by the Holy Ghost, has declared the proselytes of the gate (obliged by a particular law to certain abstinences) acceptable to Him, on the terms of faith, and these abstinences, and no other; therefore let us enjoin these abstinences to idolatrous Gentiles, who were never obliged to observe them before."

2. It agrees with James's quotation from Amos (which he brings to enforce Peter's argument, and to shew how agreeable his sense was to a prophecy in that prophet), which relates only to the proselytes of the gate, as far as St. James makes use of it: "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which

¹ Acts xv. 7—12.

is fallen down (by raising up Christ to sit on David's throne)'—that the residue of men might seek after the Lord." It is in the prophet, that they may possess the residue of Edom (that is, the worst enemies of Israel, or a remnant of the most profligate and abandoned idolaters), and all the Gentiles "on whom my name is called;" that is, all the proselytes of the gate, or by far the greater part of them. The sense of the prophecy being this, is therefore very applicable to James's purpose; that, after Christ was set on David's throne, not only a remnant of the most abandoned idolaters should become Christ's subjects, but all the Gentiles "on whom my name is called," or who are called by my name, or call upon my name; that is, the proselytes of the gate, who generally became Christians where Christianity was preached; being by far the best prepared of any to receive it, not only as they were free from idolatry on the one hand, but as they were likewise free from superstition on the other. For, as St. James adds, "known unto God are all His works, from the beginning of the world." Before Cornelius's conversion, there were but a few single persons among the Gentiles that feared God, Melchizedeck, Jethro, Job, &c.; but God designed all along to visit the Gen-

¹ Acts ii. 30.

tiles, to take out of them a people for His name" (or, for His honour); and He, who knew this from the beginning, pointed it out to the Jews, by ordering such persons to be received among them, on their worshipping God, and abstaining from these prohibited things; and yet more fully, by sending down the Holy Ghost on them, on His first visiting the Gentiles by Peter, as we shall see more clearly by and by.

3. Agreeably hereunto is James's expression also, when he comes to sum up the matter; διὸ ἐγὼ κρίνω, "wherefore my sentence (or my opinion or judgment) is, that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles are turned unto God;" the very description of a proselyte of the gate at that period, who were turned from "these vanities unto the living God;" and being already turned unto God when they are converted to Christianity, they are not then said to be turned unto God from idols, as the Thessalonians are said to be,¹ when their bare conversion from idolatry is expressed; nor are they exhorted "to turn unto God," as the heathens at Lystra are:² but, being already turned unto God, when they are converted to Christianity, are said to be "turned unto the Lord."³ A similar expression St. Luke uses of Lydia, a proselyte of the gate, that "the Lord opened her

¹ 1 Thess. i. 9.² Acts xiv. 15.³ Ibid. xi. 21.

heart;"¹ and acquaints us, that she said concerning herself, unto Paul and his company, "if ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord."²

4. St. James's argument agrees to the proselytes of the gate alone. It is this: "For Moses hath in old time, in every city, them that preach Him; being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day;"³ which is as much as to say, "Let the proselyte converts abstain from things offered to idols, &c. after their conversion to Christianity, as they did before their conversion: since they will hear the law of Moses read in the synagogues after their conversion as they did before. And as they were under an obligation to abstain from these things before their conversion, in order to entitle themselves to those privileges from the Jews, which they enjoy as proselytes of the gate; they themselves would certainly wonder with reason, if they should, after their conversion to Christianity, be indulged in any of those points which Moses so positively forbids them. Nor would they alone be surprised at such an indulgence; but those Jews also (who used to allow them, among other privileges, to join in some parts of the temple and synagogue worship on these terms), who will be highly incensed at it, on hearing

¹ Acts xv. 14.

² Ver. 15.

³ Ver. 21.

the law of Moses read and preached every Sabbath-day, in which these abstinences are so strictly enjoined; and at the same time very much enraged against them for it, and against the Christian religion, that should thus release the proselytes of the gate from a civil obligation that they were under to a law of a country where they sometimes sojourn; and on which, they are entitled to certain privileges there. For that Moses's law forbid the proselytes of the gate eating things offered to idols, blood, things strangled, and fornication, as the condition of living or sojourning and enjoying certain privileges among them, I have proved before." This is a paraphrase of St. James's argument, that seems to me to be perfectly agreeable to his design, and close to the words; whereas I have not seen any hitherto, that either agrees with St. James's intention here, or with the words in which he expresses it.

V. This hypothesis alone agrees with several things which occur in the letter.

As, 1. with the address of the letter. The address of the letter is not in general to all the brethren which are of the Gentiles indefinitely; but to the "brethren of the Gentiles which are turned unto God, in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia." Now in Antioch the brethren were all proselytes, as we have proved before; so it is more than probable they were in other parts of

Syria and Cilicia : for the Jews were not now so ready to receive the gospel as the proselytes of the gate ; and the proselytes of the gate were more numerous in Syria and Cilicia, countries bordering on Judæa, than elsewhere ; and St. Paul spent a considerable time there, soon after the conversion of Cornelius,¹ before he and Barnabas turned to the Gentiles.² The very direction of the letter plainly points it out to be written to the proselytes that had become Christians in those parts. For otherwise, why was it not directed to Antioch only, where the question was debated ? why to Syria and Cilicia, but that there were proselyted converts there in great number ? why not to all the brethren in Lycaonia, Pamphylia, Pisidia, but that they were chiefly brethren of another sort, whom this question did not concern ? And though these converts to Christianity had not hitherto taken the name of Brethren, but of Christians only, for reasons already mentioned ; yet they, being acknowledged to be witnessed to by the Holy Ghost, and to be purified as well as they, are now owned as brethren by the church of Jerusalem, and addressed to by them as such.

I know it may be objected, that Paul and

¹ Gal. i. 21. Acts xi. 25, 26. Ann. 42, 43.

² Acts xiii. 46. Ann. 45, 46.

Silas are said to deliver this decree “to the churches in Lystra and Derbe (cities of Lycaonia), to be kept by them :”¹ and it may be said, that that shews it was intended for others, besides the brethren in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia ; and that therefore this decree might be intended for the idolatrous Gentiles, as well as for the proselytes of the gate, if not for the idolatrous Gentiles only.

And I agree thus far, that this decree was certainly intended as a rule or advice to all proselytes of the gate converted to Christianity, wherever they were ; but was directed only to those proselytes of the gate that were converted to Christianity in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia ; because the greatest number of them was there, and there the question arose, and had been agitated : and therefore, if there were churches composed of proselytes of the gate converted to Christianity in other parts, as perhaps particularly there might at Derbe and Lystra (cities of Lycaonia, the very next country to Cilicia), it belonged to them, as well as to those in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia.

But I am apt to think that the churches to which Paul and Silas are said to have “delivered the decrees to be kept,”² are the churches of Syria and Cilicia, through which we are told

¹ Acts xvi. 4.

² Ibid.

“they went:”¹ for otherwise we have no account of Paul and Silas’s delivering the decree to the churches in Syria and Cilicia, to whom it was directed as well as to those of Antioch. And it would be something extraordinary, if so accurate an historian as St. Luke should give no account of this letter’s being delivered to the brethren in Syria and Cilicia, as well as at Antioch; since it was directed to the former as well as to the latter. And it would be yet more extraordinary, if, after he had omitted to give us any account of this decree’s being delivered to the brethren in Syria and Cilicia, to whom it was immediately addressed, he should give us an account how it was delivered and received in Derbe and Lystra, cities of Lycaonia, to whom it was not addressed. And Acts xvi. 4, 5, agrees with Acts xv. 41, supposing them to belong to one another. For they will then read thus: “And he (Paul with Silas)² went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches;³ and as they went through the cities (namely, of Syria and Cilicia) they delivered them the decrees to be kept, that were ordained of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.” And on the supposition that the 4th and 5th verses of the

¹ Acts xv. 41.

² Ver. 40.

³ Ver. 41.

xvith chapter should be the 43d and 44th verses of the xvth chapter ; the 1st, 2d and 3d verses of the xvth chapter will stand well connected with the 6th and 7th verses of the same chapter : and the taking out the 4th and 5th verses, and adding them to the end of the preceding chapter, will make no chasm or interruption in the xvith chapter. I should therefore be apt to think that there is a transposition here, and that the 4th and 5th verses of the xvith chapter should be the 42d and 43d verses of the xvth chapter ; or else that the 1st, 2d and 3d verses of the xvth chapter are a parenthesis, which perhaps is more likely to be the case.* But, however that matter is, if the decree had concerned others besides the proselytes of the gate ; how comes it to pass, that St. Luke does not so much as mention Paul and Silas's carrying it farther than Lystra and Derbe, cities of the next country to Cilicia ; if he even mentions their carrying it thither, and there be no parenthesis or transposition in the text ? and why then does he not give us an account of their carrying it farther on, to all the countries of the Lesser Asia, to Macedonia, Greece, and Rome ; and of the re-

* The like parentheses may be observed, Mark xvi. 3, 4. Gen. xiii. 10. Josh. xxiv. 26. On which the reader may consult Bishop Kidder's *Demonstration of the Messiah*, Part ii. p. 103, 104.

ception the churches in those countries gave it, as well as the churches in Derbe and Lystra?

2. This hypothesis alone agrees with several things in the body of the letter.

1. "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay no greater burthen, than to abstain," &c.¹ I have proved in the Third Essay, that these words, "it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us," do not signify any immediate inspiration that the apostles, elders, and brethren were under at that time (as has been generally thought, and even by Spencer, who says this council was *Θεόπνευστος*; though he a little after says, they omitted or forgot something, which St. Paul afterwards supplied in one of his epistles).² When they therefore declare, "that it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us," it must relate to some decision which the Holy Ghost had made in this case, and from which they argued. Now that plainly refers to the case of Cornelius and his family; upon whom, we read, the Holy Ghost fell, as it did on the one hundred and twenty at the beginning;³ by which, Peter says, "God bore them witness, who knew their hearts."⁴ Cornelius and his family were proselytes of the gate. And in

¹ Acts xv. 25. ² See Dissert. in loc. cap. iv. in his solution to the third objection.

³ Acts x. 44. xi. 15. xv. 8.

⁴ Ibid. x. 44. xv. 8.

their conversion to Christianity the Holy Ghost fell on them, without being circumcised, or embracing the Jewish religion, or submitting to any more of the laws of Moses than what proselytes of the gate were subject to. And from hence they argue, that this was a plain and full declaration, or witness by the Holy Ghost, that proselytes of the gate, as such, were acceptable to God, on their believing the word of the gospel, without farther conformity to the law of Moses. And if this be the meaning of these words (as I think nobody will doubt, on considering the plain reference the letter bears to Peter's and James's speech), they can only relate to proselytes of the gate converted to Christianity; but cannot by any means relate to idolatrous Gentiles, converted to it; to whom it was not known in this assembly that the Holy Ghost had ever borne witness, by falling on them as He did on the apostles and their company at the beginning; if the Holy Ghost ever did fall, or at least at this time had fallen, on them in that manner.

2. It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay no greater burthen "than these things."

Why these things, and no others? Why were not the brethren in Antioch, &c. to abstain from swine's flesh; a thing as abominable to the Jews, as strictly forbidden by Moses, as blood? Why

were they not to abstain from all other unclean meats? Why not from things torn or that died of themselves? What reason can be given for this, but that these were not forbidden by the law of Moses to a proselyte of the gate,¹ but to the Israelites only, that is, Israelites by birth or religion;² for by a stranger there is meant a proselyte to righteousness.³

Why these things of such an heterogeneous nature; things in their own nature unlawful, with things in their own nature indifferent, and all in the same decree? Or what should make the church of Jerusalem think of things that have so little seeming connection with one another as these four; but that these things were forbidden to the proselytes of the gate by Moses together, and the only things which were forbidden by him, that were not against the law of nature; as none of these were, but the last; and perhaps not even that, in every instance of it?

Why these things in the order they are here forbidden; things offered to idols, blood, things strangled, and fornication; but that this is precisely the order in which they are forbidden by Moses to the proselytes of the gate, in the xviith and xviith chapters of Leviticus? And the order

¹ Deut. xiv. 21.

² Lev. xvii. 15.

³ See Selden, de Jur. Nat.

in which these are mentioned in the decree is the more remarkable, because it is not the order in which they are mentioned in the debate by St. James ;¹ though it is the order, not only in which they are mentioned in the decree in this chapter, but as the decree is repeated by St. James :² the reason of which difference I take to be this ; that, when the apostles were debating, the order of things was rather observed, than the order of the prohibition ; and so pollution of idols is mentioned first, as the likeliest or most frequent enticement to idolatry ; fornication as the strongest ; things strangled as the next likely enticement to pollutions of idols ; and blood as the least temptation to idolatry of any of them all : pure blood, or mixed up in meat or drink, being far from the most tempting entertainment. This having been, in all likelihood, the reason of their being at first forbidden by the great legislator to the proselytes of the gate, St. James is the less careful in his speech to observe the order in which they had been forbidden in Leviticus.³ And perhaps he was the less curious to observe that order, because there was no question in this assembly, whether the proselytes of the gate were bound by these laws of Moses after their conversion to Christianity or no. The question only was, whether

¹ Acts xv. 20.² Ibid. xxi. 25.³ Lev. xvii. 18.

they were not bound to more. But, when they send their decree to the proselytes of the gate converted to Christianity, they put them in the very order in which Moses had promulgated these laws ; to shew them that, notwithstanding their conversion to Christianity, they must not pretend to a freedom from these laws of Moses ; but must acknowledge themselves still bound by them, as much as they were before ; though by these four only. How they came to be so, we shall see afterwards.

SECTION VI.—*The hypothesis which has been here proposed and defended, can alone solve all the difficulties respecting the decree.*

I am apt to think, no hypothesis but that which I have here advanced will answer these queries : they quite puzzled all the learning and acuteness of Dr. Spencer ; and, I believe, must puzzle every one without the help of this solution. He seemed to feel his own weakness here, when he says, “ *varias itaque tam singularis interdicti causas assignabo, ut earum saltem nonnullæ scopum attingere censeantur.*”¹

3. It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay no greater burden than these “necessary things ;” that is, things which these

¹ C. iii. § 4.

Gentile Christians were necessarily to observe by virtue of some precept or obligation ; which circumcision was not. Why necessary to Gentile Christians ; who are the persons supposed to be concerned in this decree, by all that have written upon it ? “ Necessary to all Gentile Christians in their own nature,” say some : blood being unwholesome, and making men fierce ; which yet the physicians and the supreme powers of countries have not found out : the one not advising against it, nor the other forbidding the use of it.

“ Necessary to all Gentile Christians,” by virtue of the precepts to Noah, say others. But it is not likely, that there were ever such precepts given to Noah ; since Moses says nothing of them. Nor are things offered to idols, fornication, things strangled, or blood, any of the seven precepts, as they are enumerated by the Rabbins.¹ All that has any sort of affinity to this matter in the precepts of Noah is the seventh ; which is, not to tear off a limb from a live animal ; by which great cruelty to the animals was thought by the Jews to be forbidden ;² and which undoubtedly was the case.³ Nor is it likely, that Noah and his children thought they were restrained from things offered to idols, if

¹ See Selden, de Jur. Nat. ² Ibid.

³ See my Dissert. on Gen. ix. 1—8.

they thought they were forbidden all species of fornication ; which Grotius and Selden think they were not.¹ But, after all, are we sure that more is meant by this prohibition, than that they should not eat the flesh of an animal that had life remaining in it, and the blood yet warm and flowing in the part they had torn from it to devour, as birds and beasts of prey do ?

“ Necessary to all Christian Gentiles, by Christian prudence, from the then state of things,” say others : in which class Spencer has excelled. But where is any thing said to be necessary in Scripture, on this consideration ? This consideration may make things said to be expedient in Scripture, but never simply necessary. And where is this notion hinted ? From what is it collected by Spencer ? From a vast farrago of Pagan and Jewish learning ; but without a single notice from the debate, or the letter, or the decree itself, to support it. All the reasonings to support it can only be drawn by a man of equal learning with Spencer (from other fountains than this text or any other in the Bible) ; and are not to be understood without a great compass of thought, or to be retained without a very happy memory. Do any of the apostles write thus to Christians in any parallel case ? We have something similar to that which Spen-

¹ Grot. in Acts xv. 20. Selden, de Jur. Nat. lib. vii. c. 5.

cer supposes this to be, in the case of eating in the idols' temple. Does St. Paul determine the thing absolutely, going upon a concatenation of deep reasoning, built on the knowledge of a great deal of divine and human learning? Or does he not support his opinion by arguments, and answers to objections, and then appeal to the judgment of his reader? Let any one peruse the eighth and tenth chapters of the first epistle to the Corinthians, and see if I have not represented the case fairly. Can any one then suppose, that the apostles, elders, and brethren, would treat the Gentile brethren of Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, in this manner? I think no man can suppose it, that either considers the character of the apostles, or the vast tenderness and respect with which they appear to treat the Gentile brethren on this occasion. If the meaning of the apostles had been this, namely, "In answer to your desire to know our sense, whether all Gentile Christians are obliged to submit to all Moses's law; we tell you, that you must abstain from things offered to idols, &c. only whilst the conversion of heathens is a new thing; lest they should be drawn, or draw others, to idolatry; or lest they should be thought to be idolaters still;" as Spencer would have it. Would they not first have said, "No, you are not obliged by Moses's law?" Not only good sense requires it (for without this,

the supposed enthymem is a mere riddle); but especially their tenderness for the Gentile Christians: lest the zealots should have occasion, from their silence, to have urged the conformity of all Christians to the law. Was there no danger of giving too much countenance to this notion, when the false brethren were urging the vigour of the law so strenuously, and spying into the full liberty of the idolatrous Gentiles converted to Christianity, which Paul kept from them, and revealed only to the three chief apostles; for fear of the ill effects of a furious opposition from them, if they had known it? ¹ Sure it had been necessary first to have secured this point, and then, if needs must, to have added, “but, lest ill consequences should ensue from too great an use of your liberty, abstain from these four things at present:” and then have added those reasons to enforce their advice, so ingeniously contrived by Spencer; and in which the whole force of that advice must have lain.

But Spencer's hypothesis is not only entirely unsupported from the text, and against some hints in it, from the then state of things; but directly against St. Paul's express assertions elsewhere. For so far is he from telling the Corinthians, that they must not use any meats or drinks that had been offered to idols, because they are enticements, the concomitants

¹ Gal. ii. 2.

and marks of idolatry, and therefore to be abstained from in that early age of the Christian religion; that he allows the Corinthians to eat meat offered to the idols, which was sold in the shambles,¹ and at private tables,² and even in the idols' temple;³ and only forbids the use of them in professed honour and worship of an idol;⁴ in case of hardening an idolater;⁵ or in case of scandal to weak Christians:⁶ which single consideration alone destroys Spencer's scheme. But I shall speak more fully to this point under the IXth head. These abstinences therefore cannot be called necessary to any Gentile Christian, on these reasons, or on any other, but only that of their being enjoined by Moses's law to some Gentiles; namely, the proselytes of the gate: so that the church of Jerusalem advises the proselytes, who were become Christians, against the use of those things which were forbidden to them by the law of Moses, but not against the use of those things which, however they might be forbidden to the Jews, were allowed them; as swine's flesh, or any of the other unclean meats forbidden by that law to the Jews, but not to the proselytes of the gate. Nor do they decree against the use of any thing that died of itself, or that was torn of beasts (though the blood was in a thing that

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 25.² Ver. 27—31.³ Ibid. viii. 10.⁴ Ibid. x. 7—23.⁵ Ver. 28.⁶ Ibid. viii. 9—13.

died of itself altogether as much as in that that was strangled, and in that which was torn by beasts perhaps almost as much), because that was not forbidden to a proselyte of the gate by the law of Moses.¹

VI. This is the only hypothesis that makes the answer given by the church of Jerusalem to the question sent from the brethren of the Gentiles in Antioch, &c. express, direct, simple, and pertinent; or that makes the question and answer *ad idem*. The question is, “Are the Gentiles that are now converted to Christianity, in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia (or, in other words, are the proselytes of the gate converted to Christianity, in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia), bound by Moses’s law?” The answer, as it is represented by some, is, “All Gentile Christians are bound by the law of nature to abstain from pollutions of idols, things strangled, blood, and fornication.” As it is represented by others, it is, “All Gentile Christians are bound by the seven precepts of Noah, to abstain from them.” Again, as it is represented by others, it is, “All Gentile Christians are bound to abstain from them by rules of Christian prudence, whilst such a state of things lasts.” Whereas, as nothing of all this is ever mentioned or hinted at in the answer; so it can never be made to relate to the question (as any

¹ Lev. xvii. 15. Deut. xiv. 21.

one may easily perceive) but by a very remote implication, and that not without great learning; and at last appears too laboured for truth. Let any one read Spencer's Dissertation on this decree, and see if it does not appear so to him; though it is set off to the greatest advantage by that able writer. Whereas, if the answer be this, "The proselytes of the gate are bound by those laws of Moses after their conversion to Christianity by which they were bound before, and by no others;" it is the most clear, simple, express, and pertinent, that could possibly be given to the question.

SECTION VII.—*Enquiry whether the conversion of the idolatrous Gentiles was known at Jerusalem, at the time of the enactment of the apostolical decree.*

VII. But it will put it past doubt, that the decree related only to the proselytes of the gate converted to Christianity, if it appears that the conversion of the idolatrous Gentiles was not known at Jerusalem at the time of this decree. I have said a good deal, that may serve to this purpose, in the Third Essay; but I will repeat some things here that I said there (they being very material to my view at present), rather than give the least interruption to the thoughts of the reader, by turning him thither; where what I have said, that is to my present purpose, is applied to another.

St. Paul tells the Galatians, that, at this time of his going up to Jerusalem, "he went up by revelation," or special direction (that is, to himself immediately, or to some in the church of Antioch); and, as I think is plainly implied, to communicate the gospel which he preached to the Gentiles (that is, the faith of Christ, with an entire freedom from all the laws of Moses, which I have proved to be the meaning of the Gentile gospel in the Second Essay), to the three chief apostles, James, Peter, and John; though but only privately to them, "lest by any means he should run, or had run, in vain;" that is, lest the furious opposition, that would have been given him by the Jewish Christians, bigoted to their own law, and violently set against the idolatrous Gentiles (to whom they would not so much as have Christ preached, even after this; as St. Paul tells the Thessalonians; 'lest, I say, this perverseness of the Jewish Christians should have raised an opposition to the preaching the gospel to the idolatrous Gentiles,'² and have been a means of obstructing the propagation of the gospel among the Jewish believers, or an occasion of their apostacy from it. But whether there was any revelation that Paul should communicate his gospel to these three apostles, and them only, or no, as well as

¹ 1 Thess. ii. 16.

² Gal. ii. 1—11.

to go up to Jerusalem ; yet it is certain, that he acquaints the Galatians, that in fact he did at this time first communicate that gospel to these three apostles, and to them alone ; or, which is the same thing, that he communicated it to them privately : the words are, Ἀνέβην δὲ κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν καὶ ἀνέθεμεν αὐτοῖς, scil. ἀπόστολοις, of whom he had before spoken ;¹ or τοῖς δοκοῦσι, which immediately follows. For there is nothing else that αὐτοῖς can refer to, either of any thing that goes before, or follows after. For “ them ” can never be referred to Jerusalem ;² and the sense must be, “ and I communicated to them,” namely, the apostles, “ the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but to them that were of reputation (only), privately ; ” or else the sense must be, “ and I communicated to them (namely, which were of reputation) the gospel, which I preach among the Gentiles ; but privately to these persons of reputation, lest,” &c. And it is consequently necessarily implied, that he then carefully kept it from all others ; and particularly from “ those false brethren, who were unawares brought in to this assembly, and came in privately, to spy out the (fuller) liberty which we (that is, you Galatians under the predicament of idolatrous Gentiles) have in Christ Jesus : that they might

¹ Chap. i. 17. 19.² Ibid. ii. 1.

bring us (that is, you and all those idolatrous Gentiles) into bondage again ;” by raising the fury of the Jewish believers against this full liberty, which they are not yet able to bear ; and of which perhaps these false brethren had then got some sort of intimation, or suspicion. Now it is scarce conceivable, that Paul should declare the conversion of the idolatrous Gentiles to the whole church ; and declare the gospel that he preached to those Gentiles only to the three chief apostles. If he had declared the conversion of the idolatrous Gentiles to the whole church, how could he have well avoided to communicate the gospel that he preached to them ? Would it not have been asked, either by friends or foes, by the more bigoted or the more moderate, what he preached to them ? Particularly would it not have been asked by those “ false brethren unawares brought in (to this assembly), who came in privately, to spy out this full liberty, which we (Galatians, that is, idolatrous Gentiles) have in Christ Jesus :” (to the intent) that “ they might bring us into bondage ?” And how then could Paul and Barnabas have avoided answering their question ? Or if they had made no answer, not answering had been confessing. Whereas we may be sure, that Paul, who took so much care not to impart his gospel, for fear of the most mischievous consequences, would certainly avoid

that which (I think I may say) must necessarily have led to the divulging of it.

And methinks, if St. Paul and Barnabas had declared the conversion of the idolatrous Gentiles, and had been so understood by the church of Jerusalem, we should have had some account of the great astonishment and exultation with which it had been received by the reasonable; and of the fury with which it had been received by the false and the bigoted part of the church. What expostulations would it have produced in this assembly, if they then had it to say, that Paul and Barnabas conversed with the idolatrous Gentiles? These were effects which the first news of a less remarkable event produced: namely, the conversion of the devout Gentiles, and on the terms on which Paul conversed with them, and offered peace and reconciliation to them. For first they expostulated upon it with Peter; and when they heard the matter fully, they held their peace, and glorified God; saying, with astonishment and joy, “Then hath God also unto the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.”¹ Whereas St. Luke drops no hint of any emotion of this kind in either of the two parties in this whole chapter.

And that the time of St. Paul’s being present at this debate is the very time that he speaks

¹ Acts x. 18.

of communicating his gospel to the three apostles only,¹ is plain from hence ; that he says it was “ fourteen years after ” (that is, his conversion²), which was ann. 35 ; and was therefore the time of his being present at this debate, namely, ann. 49.³ And as St. Paul does in effect acquaint the Galatians, that he did not impart the news of his converting the idolatrous Gentiles at this time of his being at Jerusalem to the elders or the church, since he says he communicated the gospel of the Gentiles only to the three apostles privately ; so St. Luke seems to me to intimate plainly, that he first imparted it to the elders of the church of Jerusalem, together with the account of his converting the idolatrous Gentiles, the fifth time of his being there.⁴ St. Paul had told the Galatians, that he communicated his gospel “ only to the three chief apostles ; ” and St. Luke says,⁵ having his eye perhaps to this very account of St. Paul’s to the Galatians, “ And the day following, Paul went in with us unto James, and all the elders were present ; and—declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.” And then the sacred historian adds, that they received this account in a manner suitable to so

¹ Gal. ii. 2. ² Ver. 1. ³ See the Abstract.

⁴ Acts xxi, 17, 18, 19.

⁵ Ibid.

great an event: for “when they heard it,” St. Luke says, “they glorified the Lord;” the very words he used to express the joy and astonishment, with which the believing Jews at Jerusalem received the first news of the conversion of the devout Gentiles: ¹ and the very expression which St. Paul makes use of to the Corinthians; foreseeing how this news would be received by the church of Jerusalem; when he says (speaking of their contributions that he was at that time just coming to them to receive, and then to carry to the poor saints in Judæa), “For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is, or will be, abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God, whilst, by the experiment of this ministration, they (shall now first) glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them.” ² This agreement of expression between St. Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians, and St. Luke in his history, is the more considerable, because St. Luke was with St. Paul when he wrote that epistle to the Corinthians; and may from thence be supposed to have made use of this expression in his history, from St. Paul’s having used it in that epistle. And then gave St. Paul their advice, how to clear himself from

¹ Acts xi. 18.

² 2 Cor. ix. 12, 13.

a calumny, that seems to have sprung up with the first news that had reached the church at Jerusalem, of his teaching the idolatrous Gentiles.¹ And I think it the more probable, that the conversion of idolatrous Gentiles, and the gospel that he preached to them, were not known before to the church of Jerusalem; because James speaks of this decree (which I hope I have proved related to the proselytes of the gate converted to Christianity) as the only thing that the church of Jerusalem had known, until then, relating to Gentile converts. “As to the Gentiles which believe,” says he, “we have written and concluded, that they observe no such things (that is, the law and customs²), save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication.”³

SECTION VIII.—*Objection from the assertion of St. Paul and Barnabas, that they had declared to the church at Jerusalem all that God had done with them, with other objections also, considered.*

I am well aware of an exception of great weight that lies against this opinion, from its being said, that Paul and Barnabas declared the conversion of the Gentiles, as they went

¹ 2 Cor. ix. 21—26.

² Ver. 21.

³ Ver. 5. See the Third Essay.

through Phœnice and Samaria, on their journey from Antioch to Jerusalem,¹ and that they declared to the church of Jerusalem “all (or the) things that God had done with them.” Yet both these expressions are general, and may be referred to, or at least might be understood of, the proselyted Gentiles only; there being nothing that should necessarily oblige us to refer them to idolatrous Gentiles, or make the church of Jerusalem understand it of them. For that Gentiles in Scripture sometimes signifies proselytes of the gate, is plain from the Acts.² And as the church of Jerusalem had had their thoughts much exercised about these proselyted converts in the case of Cornelius; in the first conversion of them at Antioch, by the men of Cyprus and Cyrene; in sending Barnabas thither; and now in this question being brought from them, by Paul and Barnabas and others; it is very likely, that whatever Paul and Barnabas declared about the Gentiles, if they did declare any thing that in fact, and in their own intention, related to the idolatrous Gentiles; yet, expressing themselves in general terms, the church of Jerusalem understood them as if they had spoken of proselyted Gentiles only, and of the great success which they had

¹ Acts xv. 3.

² Chap. x. 45. xi. 1, 18, and some few other places.

had among them, at Antioch, and in Syria, Cilicia, or in other places :¹ and I am the more inclined to think that Paul and Barnabas were then understood to speak of their success among the proselyted Gentiles only,² because it immediately follows, that, on the church's receiving this account, "there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, that it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses ;"³ which, as I have proved before, was natural enough for them to contend for in relation to the proselyted Gentiles converted to Christianity ; but not so likely for them to contend for in relation to the idolatrous Gentiles, at least in the first instance.⁴

There is another exception to which this matter is liable. John, surnamed Mark, went with Saul and Barnabas, whose nephew he was, from Jerusalem ; and he was minister to them, when they converted Sergius Paulus at Paphos in Cyprus ; and there left them, and returned to Jerusalem. Now it will be thought difficult to suppose that he should not be acquainted with the commission St. Paul and Barnabas had received at Antioch in Syria. And it is certain he was with them at the conversion of Sergius

¹ See the Preface. ² Ver. 3, 4. ³ Ver. 5.

⁴ See Essay III. and the Preface.

Paulus : and it will be thought therefore highly probable, that he should know of this commission, and that he should impart the news of the commission, and the conversion of Sergius Paulus, to the church of Jerusalem, or to some of them, at least to Peter (whose minister he was) on his return. To this I answer in the first place in the general, that all that at most can be argued from this is, that because Mark knew this news, he might probably acquaint others at Jerusalem with it. But this probability cannot be of equal weight with the positive evidence that has been given that they were not acquainted with it. But to be a little more particular. 1. Though Mark knew of the commission, which the Holy Ghost notified to the church of Antioch by the prophets, that Christ had given them, to go to the idolatrous Gentiles ; yet the gospel he was to preach to them might not be made known to the church, either by those prophets, or by Saul, or any other way. 2. Though Mark was present at the conversion of Sergius Paulus, yet Saul and Barnabas do not seem to go to Sergius Paulus in execution of the commission they had received at Antioch in Syria, but upon being sent for to him.¹ They do not seem to have opened their commission till they come to Antioch in

¹ Acts xiii. 7.

Pisidia. It may be, they did not know themselves when they were to open that commission, and waited for further directions from Providence, or fresh revelation.¹ The conversion of one single idolatrous Gentile, who sent for Barnabas and Saul, would not of itself notify the subsequent conversions of idolatrous Gentiles to Mark, any more than the conversion of the Syrophœnician woman gave the disciples occasion to think that the Gentiles should in great numbers be made the disciples of Christ afterwards: and it is probable that the deputy only was converted: we do not read that any of his family or friends were, as we are informed was the case of Cornelius. 3. Though Mark knew of this commission, and of the conversion of Sergius Paulus, and if he knew of the gospel he was to preach in pursuance of it, yet he might conceal it from others, either by direction of the Spirit, or by directions from Saul and Barnabas, or from prudential considerations of his own.

I would not conceal any difficulty of consequence, that has occurred to my own thoughts; but, after proposing it, and what has taken off the weight of it with me, I leave the reader to judge of the evidence. And therefore I will mention an exception, that stopped me a little

¹ See such revelation, Acts xvi. 7. 9. xxiii. 11. Gal. ii. 2.

from fully entertaining this notion : which is, that Titus, who was a Greek (*Ἑλληγνῶν*), or a Gentile, went up with Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, as he informs us ;¹ and probably from Antioch (since others went up with them from Antioch thither²) ; and that Paul says, “ he would not suffer him to be circumcised.” It may then be said, If Paul carried him to Jerusalem, and especially if he carried him up thither from Antioch, and would not suffer him to be circumcised ; did not Paul then acquaint the church of Jerusalem, or at least must not the church of Jerusalem have necessarily known, the conversion of the idolatrous Gentiles from the case of Titus ? Yes. They must certainly have known it, if Titus’s being a Greek was the same thing with saying that he was an idolatrous Gentile. But he might be a Greek or a Gentile, though he was also a proselyte of the gate ; in which sense *Ἑλληγν* and *Ἑλληγεῖς* sometimes occur.³ So that I am as much at liberty to suppose him a proselyted Gentile, as any body can be to suppose him an idolatrous one ; unless something occur elsewhere to hint his being an idolatrous Gentile ; which I have not met with.

Nay, I think there is not a bare silence in

¹ Gal. ii. 2.

² Acts xv. 2.

³ John xii. 20. Acts xi. 20. xiv. 1, 2. xviii. 4. See Mill. in loc.

this case, but some hint of his being a proselyted Gentile. Paul, as I have already mentioned, tells the Galatians, that he took Titus up with him to Jerusalem;¹ and, as I have already said, in all probability, from Antioch. And then it will not be thought improbable, that Titus was one of those which are mentioned to have been sent up with Paul and Barnabas by the church of Antioch to Jerusalem.² And if he was one of those that was sent up with Paul and Barnabas, he was likely to be one of those very proselytes whom the question concerned; some of which were very proper, and therefore very likely to have been sent up with Barnabas and Paul. Paul was the more likely to take him up with him, he being his own son,³ that is, one that was converted by Paul, and not improbably at Antioch.⁴ And though Paul says he took him with him, that will be no more a proof that he was not sent by the church of Antioch, than it is a proof that St. Paul was not sent by that church because he says “he went up by revelation.”⁵ Paul might be sent up to Jerusalem by the church, and directed by God to go up thither too. And Titus might be sent by the church of Antioch at Paul’s instance and desire. And if the thoughts I have given of St.

¹ Gal. ii. 1.

² Acts xv. 2.

³ Tit. i. 4.

⁴ See the Abstract.

⁵ Gal. ii. 2.

Paul's communicating his gospel to the three apostles only, and keeping it secret at that time from the rest, especially from the false brethren that came maliciously to spy it out, and the reasons of that conduct have any thing in them, Titus must have been a proselyte of the gate, or the secret must in all probability have been fully known.

I do not pretend to prove Titus to have been a proselyte of the gate from the place where Grotius, Dr. Mill, and others, think Titus is meant; ¹ as I suppose Chrysostom did before: because, if Titus ought to be read there before Justus, as Grotius thinks, or if Justus ought not to be read there, but Titus only, as Dr. Mill thinks, yet it cannot be this Titus that went up with Paul to Jerusalem. For Justus is there described as a proselyte of the gate, "one that worshipped God" (τινὸς ὀνόματι Ἰούστου, σεβομένου τοῦ Θεοῦ), which falls in the year 52; whereas Titus who went up with Paul to Jerusalem was a convert to the Christian religion at the time of the decree at Jerusalem, and went up from Antioch with Paul upon that question.² And so exact a writer as Luke would never have described a proselyte of the gate converted to Christianity in 49, only under the lower character of a proselyte of the gate in 52, instead of

¹ Acts xviii. 7.

² Gal. ii. 2. Ann. 49.

that of one of the disciples, brethren, Christians, or believers.

If it should be farther urged, to prove Titus an idolatrous Gentile, that Paul tells the Galatians, that he would not suffer Titus to be circumcised, or that Titus was not compelled to be circumcised—"that the truth of the gospel might continue with the Galatians" (idolatrous Gentiles); I do not see any weight in that objection neither: for it tended as much to preserve the truth of the gospel with the Galatians, to keep Titus from being circumcised, if he was a proselyte, as if he had been an idolatrous Gentile. For if he, being a proselyted Gentile, had been circumcised; the necessity of circumcision to a man not obliged to it by the law of the country (where he was born or lived) had been established; which had then established circumcision as a religious, and not continued it barely as a civil rite; and must have given it the place of the terms on which a man was to obtain justification and eternal life. It must consequently have entirely destroyed the liberty of the gospel, and have made it altogether as necessary for an idolatrous Gentile to be circumcised on his conversion to Christianity, as for a proselyted one.

SECTION IX.—*On the consistency of this hypothesis with the manner in which Christianity was gradually imparted to the world.*

VIII. I think this hypothesis likewise recommends itself extremely, because it makes this decree agreeable to the very first notions of Christianity; to the methods by which Christianity was propagated in the world in all other instances; and to the principal characters that are given of it in Scripture.

Nothing is plainer than that, Christ's kingdom being not of this world, His doctrine and laws could make no alteration in men's civil state and condition; but must leave all men, in that respect, as it found them. It would otherwise have been unjustifiable in itself, and not capable of being received in the world; since it was not to be established by the sword. Now my hypothesis is entirely built upon this foundation. The decree, in my sense of it, only declaring the opinion of those who made it, to those to whom they sent it, that Christianity did not alter the condition of the proselytes of the gate, in respect of their civil obligations, or privileges; but that, as they were bound by these laws of Moses before their conversion, so they were after.

And this maxim the apostles constantly go upon in all other cases. For he that is subject

to heathen powers must be so still ;¹ he that is called being a servant must not care for it ;² he that is married must not seek to be loosed ;³ Christian parents must love heathen children, and Christian children must obey heathen parents ;⁴ Christian husbands and wives must continue so to heathen wives and husbands ;⁵ Christian servants must obey heathen masters, Christian masters must be kind to heathen servants :⁶ for this, I think, is the meaning of those commands given to the Gentile Christians in so many of St. Paul's epistles, and in the first of St. Peter's.⁷ Farther ; he that, as a Jew, was bound by all the Jewish laws as the laws of his country, remained so still ; as the heathen or idolatrous Gentiles, who were never bound by them, remained entirely free. "Is any man called being circumcised ? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision ? let him not be circumcised. Let every man abide in the calling wherein he is called."⁸ And I am apt to think, that it was on the account that Christ's kingdom was not to alter any of the Jewish laws, that Christ bids His disciples pray, that there might be no occasion for their flight on a Sabbath day before the de-

¹ Rom. xiii. 1—7. ² 1 Cor. vii. 2. ³ Ver. 27.

⁴ Eph. vi. 1. 5. ⁵ 1 Cor. vii. 10—17. ⁶ Eph. vi. 5—29.

⁷ 1 Pet. ii. 13—18. ⁸ 1 Cor. vii. 18. 20.

struction of Jerusalem,¹ that so the law and custom of the Jews, which prevented their travelling on a Sabbath day above a Sabbath day's journey,² might prevent their providing for their safety by flight. It was indeed an accusation brought by the Jews of Asia, against St. Paul, that "he taught all men every where against the people, and the law, and the temple." But it was a false accusation; and one that was so injurious to him, that, by the advice of James and all the elders, he was to shew by a vow (the only voluntary part of the Jewish polity) that he did not teach the Jews which were among the Gentiles to forsake "Moses, circumcision, and the customs; but that he himself walked orderly," as one who acknowledged himself subject to the law and the common usage of the Jews (not indeed as the law of the kingdom which God had set up under Christ in the world, but as the law of God, as King and Governor of the Jewish nation); and that he kept the law accordingly. He therefore says, "He went up to Jerusalem for to worship; and that the Jews of Asia found him purified in the temple;"³ and afterwards asserts, "that he had not offended against the law."⁴ Thus, "unto the Jews, he became a Jew; and to them that are

¹ Matt. xxiv. 20. ² Ibid. ³ Acts xxiv. 11. 18.

⁴ Ibid. xxv. 8. xxvii. 17.

under the law, as under the law" (as by preaching the Gentile gospel he became so without the law, as a Jew being without the law); being, as a Jew, according to the Christian religion itself, as much subject to the higher powers of Judæa, as the Romans were to those of Rome.¹ On this account it was, that Timothy was circumcised, being a Jew, his mother being a Jewess, though his father was a Greek.² For "*Partus sequitur ventrem*" was then a certain maxim among the Jews as well as the Romans;³ whilst St. Paul would not allow Titus a Greek to be circumcised, and declares in the strongest terms to the Galatians who were Gentiles, that "if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing," is become of no effect to you, for that "ye are fallen from grace."⁴ If the Jewish Christians had submitted to the law of Moses otherwise than as to the civil law of their country, I do not see but submitting to it must have been as fatal to their souls as to the souls of the Galatians. Thus therefore we see this precept strictly pursued by St. Paul, that if they were Jews and subject to the law, they were to remain Jews and subject to the law; and if Gentiles, or free from the law, they were to continue Gentiles, or free from it.

¹ Acts xxi. 28. 30.

² Ibid. xvi. 1.

³ See Seld. de Jur. &c. l. v. c. 15.

⁴ Gal. v. 2. 4.

And though the occasion did not lead St. Paul here to add, “Art thou called a proselyte of the gate? continue a proselyte of the gate;” yet his reasoning holds as strong in the case of the proselytes of the gate, for their continuing so, as it does in the case of the Jews, or of the idolatrous Gentiles.

If Gal. ii. 12. 14. is to be considered as an objection to this hypothesis,—“Peter did eat with the Gentiles, and lived after their manner.” I answer: Eating with the Gentiles is perhaps only a proverbial speech, signifying to converse with them;¹ but does not necessarily signify eating unclean meats, which they did. This is confirmed by Gal. ii. 12, that “when the Jews came, Peter separated and withdrew.” It should seem therefore that, by eating, conversing and living familiarly is the only thing that is meant, since that which is opposed to it is, separating and withdrawing. Hereby they treated them as unclean, as they were not righteous by the law. This was contrary to the truth of the gospel which he had preached to Cornelius. The tendency of this practice was to induce them to think, that justification was by the works of the law, and not by the faith of Jesus Christ, which was destroying the things he had built; and, being contrary to his own persuasion, which

¹ Luke xv. 1. See Acts xi. 3.

was, "that a man was to be justified by faith, and not by the works of the law," was a gross dissimulation and hypocrisy, and well deserved the reprimand Paul gave him. But, 2dly, if eating with the Gentiles and living after the manner of the Gentiles signifies laying aside all observance of Moses's laws about eating, yet Peter is not here justified for that, but only blamed that he, who had gone such a length in laying aside all regard to the law, before the decree came from James, should now go to the other extreme, and entirely withdraw and separate from all communion and conversation with them; and Paul might mention both these extremes, to shew Peter's inconsistency and prevarication the more glaringly. If it be said, But why did not Paul tell the Galatians that he blamed the laying aside all regard for the law, if that was blame-worthy, as well as withdrawing afterwards? I answer; Because it was beside his purpose; which was, not to blame Peter, but to justify himself, and shew the Galatians, that he was uniform in his preaching to the Gentiles a freedom from Moses's law; and that he did not promise any other gospel to the Gentiles than what he had preached to them, as had been insinuated of him.¹ And he blames Peter no farther to the Galatians

¹ Gal. i. 8.

336 *St. Paul's silence concerning this decree.*

than was necessary to his own defence. For this reason, he here blames St. Peter for running from one extreme to the other; but does not blame him for the first extreme.

The principal characters, and the very genius of the Christian religion, is an entire freedom from the law of Moses, and a reasonable service; that is (as far as this is concerned), a service which does not debar us from any thing that has not a moral turpitude in it, or at least that is not too base and mean for a man who has the revelation of a spiritual, glorious, and immortal life in the world to come. Now the explication I have given of this decree agrees perfectly with these characters; for it shews, that these abstinences which are here enjoined are only enjoined on proselytes of the gate converted to the Christian faith, in virtue of the obedience they owed to the civil law of Palestine.

SECTION X.—*On the consistency of this hypothesis with St. Paul's silence in his epistles respecting the apostolical decree.—Other objections considered.—Conclusion.*

IX. I think this hypothesis recommends itself no less to us, because it entirely reconciles this decree, not only with St. Paul's entire silence about it to the idolatrous Gentiles in all his epistles (which would be altogether unaccountable, if the decree related to any Gentile Chris-

tians but proselyted ones), but with several of his most express declarations in those epistles, which are utterly inconsistent with any scheme that makes the decree relate to idolatrous Gentile Christians: for he says, that “nothing is unclean of itself;”¹ and asserts with the greatest assurance imaginable, “I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself; but only to him that esteemeth it to be unclean, it is unclean:” and he says this in opposition to those who thought they must only eat herbs, lest they should eat of meats that had been offered to idols, though they did not know those meats had been so offered; the Gentiles eating nothing that had not been some way or other offered to an idol. He, on the contrary, declares himself of the opinion of those who thought they might eat all things,² unless in the case of offence: which shews that it was a matter lawful in every case but the excepted one. Nay, he says, that “the Spirit speaketh expressly of seducers that will arise, commanding to abstain from meats, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For,” he adds, “every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word

¹ Rom. xiv. 14. 20.² Ver. 1, 2, 3, 4. 17.

of God and prayer.”¹ He likewise tells Titus (who had been up with him at Jerusalem at the making of this decree), that he should oppose “the unruly and vain talkers, especially of the circumcision,” among the Cretans;² “those vain talkers of the circumcision, who subvert whole houses, teaching for doctrines Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth;” as those did,³ who “subverted the souls” of the proselyted Gentile Christians at Antioch, by insisting on their being circumcised, without any such commandment from the apostles. And Titus, in opposition to their Jewish fables and commandments of men, is to teach the Cretans (idolatrous Gentiles converted to the faith), “that to the pure all things are pure :”⁴ all things without distinction; even things offered to idols, things strangled, and blood. And he yet more expressly tells the Corinthians, not only that they may “buy things offered to idols, in the shambles, and eat them in private houses;”⁵ but supposes it to be lawful to eat “meats offered to idols in the idol’s temple” (the highest instance of the very pollutions of idols declared in the decree to be forbidden to the proselytes of the gate), unless it should offend. For he calls this eating

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 3, 4, 5.² Tit. i. 10, 11.³ Acts xv. 24. ⁴ Ver. 15.⁵ 1 Cor. x. 25. 27.

in the idol's temple "liberty and knowledge;" and allows the reasoning on which the practice was founded to be good: but only says, they must not use this liberty to offend. Which shews plainly, that the eating things offered to idols, and even in an idol's temple, was a thing lawful or indifferent out of that case;¹ it being only by actions, otherwise lawful or indifferent, that we can give offence.

But, on my hypothesis, all this inconsistency and contradiction vanishes; since it is impossible to suppose that St. Paul would have quoted a decree to the idolatrous Gentiles converted to Christianity, in the epistles that he wrote to them, which did not at all concern them. And there can be no shadow of a contradiction between a prohibition, in the xvth of the Acts, to converted proselytes of the gate, on account of a civil law of Judæa, to which they were subject before their conversion, and from which their conversion could not release them; and the liberty expressly asserted to belong to the idolatrous converted Gentiles, in these declarations of his, in his epistles; who never had been under any such civil law before their conversion to Christianity, and could not possibly be brought under such a law by their conversion to it.

¹ 1 Cor. viii. 4—8.

I am aware, that it may be objected against this hypothesis, that some words occur in this letter from the church of Jerusalem “to the brethren in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia,”¹ which seem to restrain it to the idolatrous Gentiles; namely, the words which these false brethren taught at Antioch (of the necessity of circumcision, and obeying Moses’s law), being said “to subvert their souls:” which, perhaps, it will be pretended, shews that this relates to idolatrous Gentiles, from a parallel expression which St. Paul uses to the Galatians (who were idolatrous Gentiles²), “that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing—and Christ is become of none effect unto you.”

But how does St. Paul explain this assertion? His explication comes to this: That if a Gentile would be circumcised, it was because he thought the Jewish religion still in force, or that the laws of Moses still bound all the people of God, and that obedience to them was the only terms of acceptance with Him, and of communion with the Christian church: which was in effect to renounce the terms of justification, communion, and salvation by Christ, and to seek to be justified by obedience to the law, by which “no flesh living could be justified.”³ Now will not the same reasoning hold as to a

¹ Acts xv. 24.² Gal. v. 2. 4.³ Ibid. ii. 16.

proselyte of the gate, if he would be circumcised, or keep other parts of the law of Moses besides those few to which he was bound by the law of Moses, as the condition on which he was to enjoy civil privileges in Palestine, whenever he was there ; since to all other points of the law he was on the same foot with other Gentiles ? If he sought to be circumcised, and would obey all the laws of Moses, it was not in order to entitle himself to the civil privileges of a proselyte. He was entitled to them without such obedience. He must then be circumcised, and submit to the rest of the laws of Moses, as the terms of justification and acceptance with God : whereas he did not do any thing of this, while he only obeyed those laws which Moses gave to the proselytes of the gate. For he then shewed plainly, he only did it to entitle himself to the civil privileges of a proselyte of the gate, whenever he sojourned in Palestine. Just as a Jew might be circumcised, and obey all the laws of Moses, without being ever thought to renounce Christianity, and lose the benefits of it : a converted Jew declaring no more by that obedience, than a resolution to continue to submit to the same laws of his country to which he submitted before he was converted. And therefore, though St. Paul tells the Galatians that, if they were circumcised, Christ should profit them nothing, he never says any such

thing to the Jewish converts; but bids them “continue Jews;” that is, obey the laws of their country; but still as the laws of their country. But, if they sought justification and righteousness by them before God, or taught others so to do, they then shewed themselves ignorant of the righteousness of God:”¹ and would, by “building again the things they had destroyed, become transgressors.”²

If the hypothesis I have laid down (and, as I think, proved) be true, it will from thence follow, that the proselytes of the gate, converted to Christianity, could not be obliged to abstain from these four things, by virtue of the law of Moses, or from this advice founded upon it, longer than while the Jewish polity lasted; since, it being a civil law of the Jewish polity only, that law, and the advice built upon it, must drop with all the rest: which, perhaps, is the reason, if the church of Thyatira, to which St. John writes,³ was a church of the Jews (as I have offered some observations to prove in the Second Essay), why the Spirit blames that church for “fornication and (things sacrificed to idols, εἰδωλόθυτα, or things offered to an idol in honour of the idol; that is) idolatry:”⁴ “but will put upon them none other burthen,”⁵ not the whole burthen laid in this decree;⁶ and

¹ Rom. x. 3.² Gal. ii. 18.³ Rev. ii. 18.⁴ Ver. 20.⁵ Ver. 24.⁶ Acts xv. 18.

therefore does not blame them at all for eating things strangled and blood, or perhaps even things sacrificed to idols, unless they ate them as such, and in honour of the idol to which they had been sacrificed. And yet things strangled and blood used to attend idolatry, as well as the other two, as Spencer has fully proved : and which may therefore, by the way, serve as a farther objection to his hypothesis.

There is another objection that lies against mine ; namely, the sense that the primitive church had of this decree, who regulated their sentiments and conduct by it, as by a common and standing law of Christianity. But, as this is an objection to my hypothesis only in common with all others, that make it but of a particular and temporary obligation, I shall refer my reader to other authors for an answer to it : for what will serve as an answer in their case will, in a great measure, serve in mine. I content myself with this the rather, because, whatever deference we pay the fathers or the primitive church in our days in matters of fact, there is little paid them in other matters without the plain evidence of reason and Scripture, much less against it ; their opinions in such cases (and there are a great many of them) serving only to shew us, that they were liable to ignorance and error as well as we.

AN APPENDIX;

BEING

*A Paraphrase and Notes on the XVIIth Chapter of
LEVITICUS: shewing the order in which Moses for-
bade to the Proselytes of the Gate the things which
were forbidden to the early converts in the apostolical
decree.*

LEVIT. XVII.

PARAPHRASE.

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THE law restraining every Israelite or proselyte to the Jewish religion from killing any ox, sheep, or goat, any where but at the tabernacle. This law intended to preserve them from idolatry. Eating of blood, or that which dieth of itself, or was torn by beasts, and things strangled, forbidden, with the reasons of these prohibitions.

THE law restraining every one of the Israelitish nation or religion, upon pain of death, from eating any ox, sheep, or goat, slain any where but at the door of the tabernacle; and whose blood had not been sprinkled, and whose fat had not been burnt on the altar, ver. 1—8. This law intended to preserve them from idolatry, ver. 5—8. This law extended to the stranger that sojourned among them, ver, 8,9. Eating of blood forbidden to Israelites and strangers sojourning among them, with the rea-

son, ver. 10—12. Things strangled also forbidden to them, with the reason, ver. 13, 14. Things dying of themselves, or torn by beasts, forbidden to the Israelites, and the religious proselytes, only under the penalty of being unclean till they had washed themselves, and till the even; but on the pain of bearing their iniquity, on their not submitting to that penalty.

LEVIT. XVII.

PARAPHRASE.

1 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, and unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them, This is the thing the Lord commanded, saying,

3 What man soever there be of the house of Israel,¹ that killeth an ox, lamb, or goat,² in the camp, or that

1, 2, 3, and 4. The foregoing ordinance relating to the ministration of the high-priest, in the Holy of Holies, was followed by another; wherein not only Aaron, and his sons, as the sacrificers, but all of the Jewish nation and religion, or even that lived among them, were concerned. Moses is directed by God to enact a law by God's authority, that no Israelite by

¹ "Of the house of Israel." I take these words to be in opposition to the stranger that sojourneth among you, ver. 8, or the proselytes of the gate; and therefore to include the proselytes of righteousness, who were Israelites, though they were not of Israel; Israelites by religion and profession, though not by birth. And I take them the rather to be included here because God says, Exod. xii. 49, "One law shall be to him that is home-born, and to him that sojourneth among you." N. B. The Septuagint adds here, "or of the proselytes that sojourn among you."

² "That killeth an ox, lamb, or goat." These words are so general as to take in all manner of killing; killing for private use, as well as for sacrifice. And thus, says R. Moses, Mor. Nevoc. p. iii. c. 46, "Because the Israelites were rebellious and con-

killeth it out of the camp,'

4 And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation of the Lord ; blood shall be imputed unto that man, he hath shed blood ; and that man shall be cut off from among his people :

nation or religion shall kill any beast permitted to be offered in sacrifice to God, as ox, sheep, or goat, either for offering, or for private use, at any place whatsoever but the tabernacle ; and that whosoever shall slay any such beast even either for private use as well as for sacrifice, at any other place than this stated place of worship, and shall not there offer a part of it to God, shall be capitally punished : since it is plain he that shall break this law will break it in order to offer to devils, and become the very worst of idolaters. N. B. The Septuagint adds here, " to offer a burnt-offering, or a peace-offering."

turnacious, persisted in the wicked customs in which they were educated, and made themselves the companions of devils, by eating round the blood ; therefore God commanded, that all beasts that were killed should be peace-offerings ;" i. e. should be killed before the tabernacle, and their blood sprinkled, and their fat burnt on the altar. And this I think more fully appears, if with this verse we compare Deut. xii. 20—28 ; for there it is declared, that part of the law should be repealed, from the necessity of things, when they should come into the promised land. And that then they might kill of their herd or of their flock, and eat of it in their gate ; if the altar was too far from them. Which shews, that they could not even kill to eat, any where but at the door of the tabernacle, whilst they were in the wilderness. And even when they came into the promised land, where they might kill for private use within their gates ; yet the blood, that they were now to pour on the altar, they were then to pour on the ground, as water.

¹ "In the camp, or that killeth it out of the camp." These words shew too that this law prohibits the killing beasts even for private use any where but at the door of the tabernacle. The beasts that were killed at one place (in the camp or at their tents) being for private use ; as those at the other place (out of the camp) were generally for sacrifices, before this law.

5 To the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices, which they offer in the open field,¹ even to the end that the Israelites and the religious proselytes may bring all those

¹ "To the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices, which they offer in the open field, even that they may bring them unto the Lord."—"Sacrifices." The Septuagint use here *θυσίας*. These words shew,

1. That they had offered sacrifices to devils, from the plain opposition there is between offering them in the open field and offering them to the Lord. Why is offering to the Lord opposed to offering in the open field, unless they had offered to devils there, instead of offering to the Lord? This appears more plainly from the end of this law, which is only here implied, but more expressly said to be to prevent their sacrificing to devils, ver. 7, and which is plainly implied to have been frequently practised by them, *ibid*. This appears from the very matter of the law. For why should God order all the beasts that were slain even for private use to be brought to His tabernacle, and slain as it were under His eye, and a part of them to be offered to Himself, and the blood to be sprinkled on His altar, but to prevent the pouring out of the blood in the open fields to devils? This also appears from the persons to whom it was extended, ver. 8, 9, namely, the proselytes of the gate. For why should they be prevented from offering sacrifices in the open field, and be obliged too to bring them to the door of the tabernacle, and offer part of them as a peace-offering to God, but to prevent idolatry? which in a theocracy was no more to be suffered in the proselytes of the gate than in the Israelites. This likewise appears from the penalty annexed to this law, which is capital. And why is blood to be imputed to a man that kills a beast in the open fields, and does not bring it to the tabernacle? And why is he to be cut off from his people, but because he that killed a beast in the open fields offered it to devils; and that the only effectual way to prevent it was to make them bring them all to the door of the tabernacle, and offer them to God? As Abarbanell observes on this place; who, after giving the reasons of others for this prohibition, gives his own in these words: "What seems more probable to me is, that the man that kills so (that is, in the open fields) is the occasion that men came and there ate upon the blood poured out in the fields from the killing of the beasts there; which is the worship of devils: and he that killed a beast so was as if he had brought death and desolation among all that sacrificed in that day." This likewise appears from part of this law being temporary. See ver. 7. For why must they slay all their beasts for private use, and offer the blood and fat to God in the wilderness, and not when they came to the promised land, but that they were more prone to this idolatry in the wilderness, being just come out of Egypt; and that they had frequent opportunities of practising it in desarts, where the devils shewed themselves oftener to them than in cities, towns, and well-inhabited

that they may bring them beasts which they used to

places; and that God would take various methods to cure this disposition to idolatry before they came to the promised land?

2. These words shew, that this idolatrous custom had arisen from their sacrificing in the open fields; since the obliging them to bring all beasts that they slew to the door of the tabernacle would be the effectual cure of this evil.

3. These words point out the manner in which they had sacrificed to devils in the open fields; namely, by pouring out the blood of the beasts into an hole made in the ground, and left open for the devils to feast on; they taking blood to be their food: whilst they sometimes ate the blood near the place, feasting with the devils, at least as they imagined; as at other times they left the blood for devils, and carried the flesh to their own tents. This was a way of sacrificing that they could easily make use of in any open fields, and on every occasion, without having any altar to offer it upon, which could not be soon or easily built or concealed. And that this was the way of sacrificing, we may learn from the 13th verse, where the blood of what is caught in hunting must be poured out upon the ground, and covered with dust. For what reason, but to put an end to this idolatrous practice? And that this effusion of the blood, and keeping it together in a hole or little trench, was the very offering to idols, appears from Ezek. xxxiii. 25: "Ye eat with (it should be "upon") the blood, and lift up your eyes unto the idols, and shed blood (because the beasts slain were offered to devils, and not to the Lord, ver. 4). Ye stand upon your sword, ye work abomination:" and from Deut. xii. 16, where, though they are released from bringing "the blood of all that they killed to God's altar when they should come into the promised land, because of its distance from their habitations, and are allowed to kill the beasts for private use in all their gates, yet are they commanded not only not to eat blood, but to pour it out upon the earth as water; that is, as a common thing, and not as a thing separated to any idolatrous use; and to pour it upon the earth as water, which is poured upon the surface, and soon sucked in, but is not carefully collected, and put into an hole or trench of the ground. This is yet more plainly expressed in the 13th verse of this chapter: "He shall even pour out the blood thereof (carefully and at once, and not barely let it go as water), but (carefully) cover it with the earth;" that is, all the time you continue in the wilderness, where the inclination and the opportunities for this idolatry will occur much oftener than when you come into the promised land, by the methods which I shall in the mean time take to cure you of this wicked disposition. And thus the author of the book Zohar, one of the most ancient of the Jewish writers, who, speaking of divers methods of enchantment and magic by which the Egyptians outdid all mankind, says, in Levit. fol. 235: "And when the Egyptians had a mind to have a congregation for performing their magical rites, they went into the open fields to a high mountain, and killed sacrifices, and made a trench in the earth, and sprinkled blood about the trench, and

unto the Lord,¹ unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest, and offer them for peace-offerings unto the Lord.

slay for private use, and offer in the open fields to devils (particularly, by pouring out their blood into an open hole or trench in the ground, for the devils, as they supposed, to feed on, according to an idolatrous rite then in use, especially on consulting the dead); I

got together, and offered their sacrifices to wicked and malignant spirits, and contracted familiarities with them in the mountain. And the Israelites, that were in bondage to them, went among them, and learned from them, and erred after them; according as it is written, Lev. xvii. 7, *And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto goats, after whom they have gone a whoring.* From this tradition we learn, that at the time that they went after those wicked spirits, and prepared the blood as aforesaid, and offered them sacrifices, those wicked spirits gathered themselves together, and appeared to them as hairy goats, and revealed to them the things they wanted to know from them." So likewise Josephus Albo, in *Sepher Ikkar*, Disc. iii. c. 16, speaking of the ceremonial or ritual law, says, "The killing of beasts without the tabernacle was first forbid just after the Israelites were come out of Egypt; because they were then overrun with the worship of devils, and ate upon the blood, and ate the blood and the fat;" without all doubt, according to what they had learned in Egypt. And Maimonides, who penetrated farther into the end and meaning of the ritual laws than any of the Jewish writers, says yet more expressly, *Mor. Nevoc.* b. iii. c. 46, "That though the Zabii counted blood a very unclean and impure thing, yet they ate it, because they thought it the food of the devils, and that he that ate it acquired by that means some communication with the devils; so as that the devils converse familiarly with him, and reveal future things to him, as the common people use to attribute those things to devils. There were however some among them who could not eat blood without the greatest difficulty and uneasiness (for it is a thing a man naturally abhors); these killing any beast took his blood to put it into a vessel or little trench, and (sitting in a circle round the blood) ate the flesh: imagining in this management, whilst they ate the flesh, that the devils ate the blood, and that that was their food; and that by these means a friendship, fraternity, and familiarity was contracted between them, because they all ate at one table sitting together. Besides, they were of opinion, that the devils appeared to them in dreams, revealed future things to them, and were very useful to them."

¹ "To the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they offer in the open field, even that they may bring

say, that they may bring these beasts to be slain, before me; even unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, as it were, under my eye; and particularly to some of the priests, who are now to be the only persons that can offer upon the altar; and offer them by some of those priests there for a peace-offering unto the Lord.

6 And the priest shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar of the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and burn the fat for a sweet savour unto the Lord.

6. And these beasts shall be offered as peace-offerings to me after this manner: the priest shall sprinkle the blood, and burn the fat upon the altar; as a thing that will be well accepted of by the Lord.

7 And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring: ¹

7. And by this means I will effectually prevent the Israelites and the religious proselytes from this idola-

them unto the Lord." The last words intimate plainly, that the sacrifices which they offered in the open field were offered unto devils, from that which is set in opposition to them, "even that they bring them unto the Lord;" or, as it is in the 7th verse, "And they shall (or, "that they may") no more offer their sacrifices unto devils after whom they have gone a whoring." If the sacrifices that were offered in the open fields had been offered to God, and the meaning of the law had only been that they should offer those sacrifices at the tabernacle which they used to offer in the fields, that law would have run so, and not as it now does; that is, it would have run so as to put the sacrificing in the open fields in opposition to the tabernacle, and not in opposition to the Lord, to whom indeed for the future they are here expressly commanded to offer them.

¹ "After whom they have gone a whoring." This shews that this manner of sacrificing to devils had been frequently practised among them. Moses gives us an account of their worshipping devils, Deut. xxxii. 26. And we have the like in Joshua

this shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations.

trous and magical usage which they have run into, not only in Egypt, but in the wilderness too, polluting themselves with these dæmons, on the occasion of killing and sacrificing beasts in the open fields: though I have so lately and so solemnly engaged them into covenant with myself, and espoused them to me for my own people. To which idolatrous and magical rite I see them so prone, especially whilst they continue in the wilderness haunted by these dæmons: that a law less strict than this will not be an effectual cure of this great evil. Wherefore this law (though it shall be repealed as to that part which relates to beasts killed for private use, when you come into the promised land, Deut. xii. 15, 16. 20, 21, where you cannot be near the altar, as you are here, and will not want this strict restraint so much as you do in the wilderness; yet as far as relates to sacrifices)

Josh. xxiv. 14. Mention is also made in the Psalms of their "sacrificing their sons and daughters unto devils," Psal. cvi. 37. 39; and going a whoring after their own inventions, ver. 39. See also Zech. xx. 7, and xxiii. 2, 3, Amos v. 25. And so Josephus Albo, in the place before quoted, *Sepher Ikkar*, Disc. iii. c. 16, says, "that this law was made just after the Israelites were come out of Egypt, overrun with the worship of devils." And Fagius says, upon Lev. xix. 26, "There are interpreters who think that the Israelites offered sacrifices to devils in Egypt, which they called *Schedim*: and afterwards, that they might render themselves the more acceptable to those devils, they ate part of the sacrifice near the blood poured out."

shall continue as long as this dispensation of religion lasteth.

¶ 8 And thou shalt say unto them, Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers which sojourn among you,¹ that offereth a burnt-offering or sacrifice,

9 And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer it unto the Lord; even that man shall be cut off from among the people.

8, 9. And as the proselytes of the gate are to abstain from all idolatrous and magical rites, as well as the Israelites (for you shall not suffer an idolater to live), and from those things that might make them either appear like idolaters, or tempt them or the Israelites to this or other idolatrous practices; therefore this law shall extend to them, as well as to those that are Israelites by birth or religion: especially since the proselytes of the gate are permitted to offer burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, as well as the Israelites.

¶ 10 And whatsoever 10, 11, and 12. And

¹ "Or of the strangers which sojourn among you." That is, the proselytes of the gate. I think so, for this reason; that as these verses extend the law contained in all the former verses of this chapter to some persons which are here called "the strangers that sojourn among you," so those must be the proselytes of the gate; since proselytes of righteousness were included under Israelites, ver. 2, according to the known law, "One law shall be to him that is home-born and him that sojourneth among you," Exod. xii. 49. Lev. xxiv. 22, and Numb. xv. 16. 29. This also farther appears from the words that follow, "that offereth a burnt-offering or sacrifice." For burnt-offerings, or sacrifices that were peace-offerings, the proselytes of the gate might offer. But none could offer sin-offerings or trespass-offerings but Israelites and proselytes of righteousness. Now, since no offering is here mentioned but what a proselyte of the gate might offer, it seems plain, that by "the strangers that sojourn among you" in this verse, we are to understand a proselyte of the gate. If a proselyte of righteousness had been meant here, why was it not said, "that offereth a burnt-offering, peace-offering, or a sin or trespass-offering?"

man there be of the house to Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood;¹ I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people.

11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.

12 Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you, eat blood.

for the same end Moses was ordered to give another law of the persons just before mentioned, forbidding them to eat blood drawn from a beast, by itself or mixed; a thing the Heathen were wont to do in their idolatrous and magical rites. and for this farther reason, that God having appointed the life of beasts to be accepted as a ransom and atonement for the forfeited lives of offending men; and their blood (one of the principal seats of life) to be sprinkled for that purpose in His appointed worship; it was not fit that a thing appropriated to so sacred an use should be eaten as common food. The eating of blood there-

¹ "Or of the stranger that sojourneth among you, that eateth any manner of blood." By "blood" here is not meant blood mixed with the flesh, or kept in it by strangling (that is forbidden, ver. 13.); but blood drained from the body of the beast, and eat or drunk by itself, or mixed up with any thing else. And the prohibition of blood follows that of eating things which had been offered to idols, because those offerings were generally of the larger animals, such as oxen, lambs, or goats; and that it was from those that such large quantities of blood could be drained, as could be eat or drunk by themselves, or mixed up with something else; for that reason, the eating blood is here forbidden next to things offered to idols.

And that blood here is forbidden to the proselytes of the gate, under the name of "the stranger that sojourneth among you," is not only plain from the context, and the matter of the prohibition, which it is well known did extend to proselytes of the gate, but from this consideration, that blood had been forbidden to the Israelites, under which the religious proselytes are generally comprehended, on two former occasions, Lev. iii. 17, and vii. 26, which seems to be the sense of the following verse: "Therefore I said (that is, in those places just now quoted) unto the children of Israel, No soul of you (that is, of you Israelites by birth or by religion) shall eat blood, neither shall," &c. that is, "And now I say unto you, that no stranger that sojourneth among you shall eat it."

fore was capitally prohibited to Israelites and proselytes of the gate by this law, and the severest degree of God's displeasure annexed to the wilful breach of it. And this is the reason why, as He had forbidden the eating of blood before to the Israelites, chap. iii. 17, and vii. 26, so now He should forbid it to the proselytes of the gate.

13 And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth among you, that hunteth, and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten; he shall even pour out the blood thereof,¹ and cover it with the dust.

13. And for the same end it was that Moses was ordered also to forbid both the Israelites and proselytes of the gate the eating any thing strangled, because things strangled used generally to be eaten by the Heathen in their idolatrous and magical rites. But whereas at other times the Heathen used to drain the

¹ "He shall pour out the blood thereof." This is a prohibition of "things strangled." All the blood of beasts that were ever permitted to be offered was to be sprinkled on the altar. The blood of such creatures as were permitted to be eaten, but were not allowed to be sacrificed, and which had been usually strangled by the Heathen, and eaten after they were so strangled, in honour to their idols, &c. these they were not to strangle but to let out the blood of. And, as the things that were generally strangled were such as were caught in hunting, with nets, snares, hawks, &c. therefore those are what the text mentions: but, by a parity of reason, all other things strangled are forbidden. And the reason why the beasts and birds caught in hunting are only mentioned is, that they were the things that were usually strangled.

"And cover it with the dust;" lest the earth should not suck it all up, and it should entice men, or appear as if it had enticed men, to an idolatrous usage: the Heathen sometimes pouring out the blood of these creatures (which they generally strangled) into an hole in the ground, as an idolatrous rite, as we may justly suppose from this place. Maimonides was of this opinion; for he

blood even out of those creatures which they commonly strangled, such as birds and beasts usually taken in hunting, and put it into a hole in the earth, and left it uncovered for their devils and imaginary deities to feast upon: therefore I order, that the blood of those creatures, which the Heathens used commonly to keep in the body by strangling them, and which you shall let out before you eat them, shall be let out upon the earth, and not be poured into a hole. And lest any part of it, when poured upon the earth, should not be sucked in by the earth, but remain upon it, as if it was left there for those dæmons to feed on, it shall be carefully covered with dust, in order to put an entire end to such magical and idolatrous usages.

14 For it is the life of all flesh, the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh; for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off.

14. And I also forbid things strangled, for the same reason that I forbade blood: blood being the life of every thing, and therefore appointed by me for an atonement for you. This was the reason, that I before forbade blood, after it was

says, Mor. Nevoc. p. iii. c. 46, "God commanded that the blood of all clean beasts and birds should be covered with dust where they were killed, that men might not be able to get together and eat about it, and so the fraternity between them and the devils should be defeated; though the devil in reality has a full possession of evil men."

let out of the bodies of animals, to the children of Israel, and that I now forbid them and the proselytes of the gate, to keep it in the bodies of any animal they kill for private use, by strangling it.

¶ 15 And every soul that eateth that which died of itself, or that which was torn with beasts,¹ (whether it be one of your own country or a stranger) he shall both wash his clothes and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even: then shall he be clean.

15. And tho' it is not unlawful for an alien or a proselyte of the gate to eat of things that die of themselves, or that are torn by beasts; for you Israelites or proselytes of righteousness may give them to the one, or sell them to the other, Deut. xiv. 21, yet it is so

¹ "That which died of itself, or is torn by beasts." The reason of this prohibition is not that the blood was in them; for it might as much be let out by being torn by beasts as by cutting its throat. And if things torn or dying of themselves had been forbidden because the blood was in them, they would have been forbidden to the same persons to whom blood and things strangled were forbidden; whereas we see, Deut. xiv. 21, that things dying of themselves or torn by beasts were allowed to be eaten by a proselyte of the gate. For it is said, "Ye (that is, ye Israelites and proselytes of righteousness) shall not eat them (that is, but under the pain of uncleanness); thou shalt give it unto the stranger, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it to an alien: for thou art an holy people unto the Lord." Besides, if they had been forbidden because the blood was in them, they would have been forbidden to the Israelites and to the religious proselytes, under the same capital punishment as blood; whereas they are only forbidden to eat them under the penalty of being "unclean until they had washed their clothes, and until the even." But the true reason why the Israelites and proselytes of righteousness are forbidden to eat these things may be learnt from Exod. xxii. 31, which is, that it was below the dignity of men holy unto the Lord to eat them. The words are, "And ye shall be holy men unto me: neither shall ye eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field: ye shall cast it to the dogs." But if ye do eat it, ye shall be unclean, &c. "And every soul,—whether it be one of your own country or a stranger." By "stranger" here we are to understand a proselyte of righteousness, because he, as well as he that was their own countryman, was to bathe himself in water, wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even; a penalty peculiar to those that were Israelites by birth or religion: whereas a

base, unworthy, and unbecoming an Israelite by birth or religion (who are my people) to eat of any things so vile as these (fitter for dogs than them, Exod. xxii. 31, Lev. xxii. 8), that you shall let them know, that if any soul of them shall be guilty of doing a thing so much beneath himself, he shall be in a state of uncleanness, separated from my worship, and from the rest of my people, until the evening: nor shall he then be restored to the tabernacle or the congregation, unless he wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water; and then he shall be clean.

16 But if he wash them not, nor bathe his flesh, then he shall bear his iniquity.

16. But if he does not wash his clothes, and bathe himself, he shall be liable to punishment: and if he shall offer to partake of the peace-offerings, before he has washed his clothes and bathed himself, he shall be cut off from his people.

proselyte of the gate is allowed to eat of these, without being subject to this penalty, Deut. xiv. 21.—And it is to be observed, that the phraseology is here somewhat varied. Before it is, “And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you,” ver. 8. 10. 13. But here it is, “And every soul, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger.” On which the old commentaries, *Sepher Siphra*, col. 171, and *Pesiktha Zotertha*, fol. 23. col. 2, gloss thus: “*Every soul*. Observe, it is added, *one of your own country*. Who is that? Certainly one in covenant. Whence it follows, that the stranger must be one in covenant too.” And therefore, where this form of expression occurs, the Rabbins say, that a proselyte of righteousness is denoted; as Lev. xvi. 29, Numb. xv. 13—17. See Selden, *De Jun. Nat.* l. ii. c. 2. p. 147. E. L.

AN ESSAY

ON THE

DISPENSATIONS OF GOD

TO MANKIND,

AS REVEALED IN SCRIPTURE.

PREFACE

TO THE ESSAY ON THE DISPENSATIONS.

SECTION I.—*On the causes of Deism among reflecting men.*

IT seems to be a prevailing opinion, that Deism gains ground among thinking and virtuous men; notwithstanding many excellent tracts which have appeared of late in defence of Christianity, bringing together its external evidence, and supporting it against the exceptions to that evidence.

It must be very fit for believers to consider the cause of so strange and threatening an appearance; since the being thoroughly apprised of the cause of the growth of infidelity, can alone direct us to the best methods to prevent it.

I am sensible, there are some, who will think much inquiry about this matter altogether needless; by satisfying themselves with resolving the growth of Deism into God's delivering men

up “to a reprobate sense, who do not care to retain the knowledge of Him in their minds.” But these persons entirely mistake the inquiry ; which is not about the growth of Deism among careless, scoffing, and vitious, but among thoughtful and virtuous, men.

I am sensible too there are others, who, instead of going farther into this inquiry, will do nothing more than inveigh against the liberty, the inquisitiveness, and freedom of debate which have so much contributed to the great advancement of learning, and virtue among us. It must be allowed to these declaimers, that men, who do not think at all about religion, will not be Deists : but neither will they be believers. They cannot have the rational faith of a man : that is, a belief of the agreement or disagreement of ideas, founded on what they have just reason to apprehend to be divine testimony. We must therefore be content with things as they are, and let unbelievers be among us, in order to have believers ; and not be so angry or disturbed that Deism increases, provided that a rational faith grows up along with it. For it is a much happier state to have the number of rational believers increase in a nation, though there may be with them a number of Deists, than to have all people sceptical, or entirely careless and insensible about the matter.

SECTION II.—*The natural faculties of man are not the only means by which man may acquire knowledge. The evidences of revelation.*

But to come closer to the inquiry, for the sake of those who are willing to enter into it ; I must lay this as a foundation in it, that no man, who believes there is a God, and reflects on what follows from that belief, can bring himself to think, that God has not ways to impart more knowledge to us, than we can arrive at by the bare use of the faculties He has given us. He cannot doubt whether mankind has not been, is not, and will not be, in such circumstances, in which it may have been, is, and will be, very suitable to the wisdom and goodness of God to impart more knowledge to them than they can arrive at by the bare use of their faculties ; the better to enable them to discharge the duties they owe to Him, themselves, and one another ; or, in other words, to act according to the truth of things, and consequently according to the true maxims of their own happiness and the happiness of others. And rational beings can only be better enabled to do all this, by such knowledge being imparted to them, as may assist them under the weakness of their reason (from their short and narrow views of things), and against the strength of their appetites and

passions. Every considering man therefore must see, that if God is pleased to impart more knowledge to mankind than their faculties will discover to them, it must be to this purpose ; since such a discovery alone is consistent with His wisdom and goodness, or with that prior knowledge He has given us, by the bare use of our faculties, and by the opportunities He has vouchsafed us for the exercise of them.

And as no man can reasonably receive any thing as a revelation from God, considered as the Governor of the world, which has not evidently these characters and tendencies ; so no man can reasonably reject any thing as such a revelation that has them, and that has no others inconsistent with them.

Revelation therefore appearing clearly in the times of the apostles (when it was best understood) with these characters and tendencies, and being supported by other internal, and by the strongest external evidence, offered to the senses of those to whom it was proposed ; and the apostles being at hand to clear up any difficulty that might arise against it, it is no wonder that none then could disbelieve or doubt of it ; though but too many refused to live up to its precepts, and professed to reject it, purely because they preferred their lusts and passions to virtue and holiness, and to that eternal life which revelation proposed as the motive to deny

the one and to pursue the other. But in this they were first self-condemned, afterwards their consciences became “seared as with a red-hot iron,” and they themselves at last were given up to “believe a lie.”

But in after-times things came under a very different consideration. For revelation could not be so well understood, when the apostles ceased to be its ministers; especially if their doctrine was corrupted by others: nor could the proof, that their pure doctrine really was their doctrine, or that it was so attested as it pretends to be, be so strong in after-times as it was in their times; since the proof in all after-times must be made by an appeal to the reason of mankind only, and not to their senses.

SECTION III.—*Sources of the various difficulties which prevent the right apprehension of revelation.*

In consequence of the cessation of the contemporary proofs of the truth of revelation, we have now many difficulties to arrive at the true sense and meaning of revelation; and we have none of the illuminated, or inspired, to resort to under this difficulty.

Instead of that assistance, we have many unnecessary difficulties flung in our way.

Several of the patrons of revelation have laid more weight upon it than it can bear. For

whereas revelation, as it was delivered by patriarchs or prophets, by Christ or His apostles, was only proposed in aid of natural religion, and recommended as highly useful; many since have insisted, that it is *absolutely necessary*, not barely to give us a title on which we may claim eternal life, as it is described in Scripture, but to secure men from eternal damnation, and to obtain any degree of the favour of God in another world. But as soon as persons, to whom revelation is recommended as thus absolutely necessary, come to see that it is not so, nor can be so, it may very easily happen that finding the opinion of its being absolutely necessary a great extreme, they may, without thinking farther, run into the opposite extreme, and think it entirely useless.

Other advocates for revelation, who have understood it better than the former, have indeed pleaded for it only as useful; but many of them, in explaining its principal use, have not shewn wherein its great usefulness consists, as the apostles always did. The rational divines, as they are called, are very faulty on this head. For when they have considered revelation as designed for no other purpose than to give a fresh publication of natural religion, they have made it of little use now to any but the mob (whatever it might be of at the periods in which it was given), nor of any great use to them nei-

ther. But every one will easily see, that the sinking the use of revelation so low, is no ways suitable to all the apparatus of revelation, especially of the last and most perfect revelation which God made by His Son; who, in order thereto, took on Him human nature, died on the cross, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and had all power conferred upon Him, till the consummation of all things. The peculiar doctrines of revelation can never be the duties of natural religion (as they have been too much supposed to be by these divines), but doctrines to assist us to perform them. In what way revelation does this, will be the business of the following Essay; and thither therefore the reader must be referred. In the mean time, this mistake perhaps has had almost as bad an effect as the former; and made those to whom revelation has been only recommended by a very low or by an entirely misplaced usefulness, from seeing it of little consequence, or its usefulness wrong placed, either to reject revelation, or at least think no farther about it.

I cannot but think too, that revelation has suffered very much from too partial a consideration of it. When observing men see the patrons of revelation apply themselves wholly to the explication and defence of Christianity, they presently conclude, that the patrons of those doctrines have but an indifferent opinion

of the Old Testament; and that it is for that reason they do not set themselves to consider it. Whereas Christianity is but the last link in a chain of truth, which consists of several others: and he who pretends to shew a chain of truth, must shew not one link only, but several; and shew that they are linked with the first, and with one another.

But yet revelation has suffered much more from another quarter than from any of these which I have already mentioned. For though no knowledge, as has been already observed, can be supposed to come from God, as the Governor of the world, that is not of common use and advantage to mankind; yet pretences to revelation being so capable of serving private and selfish ends (utterly inconsistent with all that happiness, which is as high and unmixed as we are capable of, and must last as long as our beings, or that may add to the happiness of others), men of ambitious and covetous minds have not only in all ages pretended to revelations which they never had, in order to accomplish their base and wicked designs; but have so misrepresented the revelation that is from God, as to make it more inconsistent with all the characters and ends of a divine revelation, than any of the counterfeit revelations, that have gained credit in any age of the world. These men have debased revelation from being the most

rational and useful discovery, into one that is almost equally absurd, and more pernicious than any other religious forgery or imposture whatsoever; whereby they have made some well-disposed men not only reject it, but become keen and bigoted against it. The apostles laid no such stumbling-blocks in the way of those who were disposed to receive revelation. They were free from all enthusiasm, uttered no jargon, taught no absurdities and contradictions; they used no charms or spells, added no idle fopperies to religion, nor any costly decorations, nor pretended to any usurped oppressive powers to support it; much less did they pretend that the whole of revelation was made up of these, or of any one of them. They renounced all these things, and every other hidden art of dishonesty, calculated only to raise an high domination, power, and profit to themselves, or to any believers that were to follow them, on the ruin of the sense, freedom, and property of others. On the other hand, they recommended revelation to their hearers, by teaching clearly the unsophisticated word of God, accompanied by the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power; and “by approving themselves,” through the greatest humility, meekness, diligence, courage, patience, and success, “to every man’s conscience, in the sight of God.”

These things which I have mentioned appear

to me to be the difficulties which prevent the virtuous Deists from receiving revelation, either as those difficulties arise from revelation itself as it is now circumstanced, or from the mistakes its patrons have made in recommending, or in explaining it. We have now indeed the Bible before us, and may thereby clear revelation from all these mistakes; we may see on what grounds it recommends itself to our consideration, and what it really is. But here men meet with difficulties in themselves, and which are far from being lessened by the misrepresentations I have just now mentioned. For it is certain, that to get at the true sense of the Bible, as it is a consistent system of useful knowledge, there must go great leisure, care, and ability. And yet still revelation is rejected by some well-disposed men, who want none of these, without so much as looking into it: the reason of which is, that they take it for granted, that that is the view and the sense of revelation, which some of its professors and interpreters have put upon it. It is certain, this is far from being any instance of their good dispositions. However, whilst from these misrepresentations, they think it either useless or pernicious, they will perhaps think themselves under no more obligation, or find no more inclination, to study the Bible, or attend to the evidence there is for the truth of it, than they feel within themselves

to study any other idle enthusiasm or reverie, any imposture or forgery ; or to attend to the evidence that may be offered in behalf of them.

If they go so far, under these prejudices, as to look into the Bible ; yet they seldom read it unless to fortify these prejudices. It rarely happens that when they study the Bible, they entirely divest themselves of them, and read it with the spirit of candour and equity. Much less will they read it with that attention and critical skill, which is necessary to understand any piece of antiquity, and particularly the Bible ; part of it being the most ancient book that is preserved to us, that can receive little foreign assistance towards the understanding any thing of it, and that can have no foreign assistance at all in relation to the peculiar matter of it. And I take this (namely, the not studying the Bible in a critical way) to be one of the greatest causes of the growth of Deism among thoughtful and virtuous men ; I mean, of those causes which arise from within themselves. And I think it will appear to be so, if we consult the history of the learned. For we shall find, that some of the greatest men, and the freest inquirers, who have studied the Bible in this way, have attained the greatest understanding, have had the most steady belief, and expressed the highest admiration of the Scriptures : such as Erasmus, Grotius, J. G. Vossius,

Knatchbull, Locke, Newton, Moyle, King, Ellis, &c.¹ (who never received any pay for being Christians): while others, who have not studied it in this way, from nominal believers have become settled doubters or unbelievers; especially if some other things have concurred; as, if they have been of inattentive or narrow minds, or have not been used to so great a compass of thought as criticism requires: if they have been used to strict demonstration, in parts of learning that are capable of it, especially in natural religion; and are thereby much disposed to doubt of every thing that has but probable or moral evidence to support it: if, from observing the pious frauds that so early took place, and the bad lives of such as would be thought its best professors, which still continue, they add to their sceptical disposition distrust, suspicion, and jealousy. All these, I think, should be considered as an unhappy turn of mind, that disposes men to relish Deism; especially when they have been strongly disgusted at revelation, by the gross misrepresentations of it which I have just now mentioned.

These several causes constitute so many different ranks and classes of virtuous and thoughtful Deists; which if we consider thus

¹ Addison, West, Sir Wm. Jones, Mr. Bryant, and many others may be added to this honorable list.

particularly, may furnish us with more just notions of them, and with better methods to recover them, than if we should only consider them in the lump. As to the case of those nominal Deists, who are so from being perfectly heedless and unthinking, loose and vicious, it is of a very different consideration ; is not within our inquiry, and besides has no difficulty attending it.

SECTION IV.—*Difference between sceptics and Deists.*

I have thought it, for some reasons, not so proper hitherto to distinguish those who reject revelation from those who do not embrace it, or the real Deists, from the sceptics. Yet I think it very proper, before I go any farther, to say this of them as well as to them, that though where (they apprehend, on their best inquiries, that) there is a want of proof of the truth of revelation, or where there is a want of leisure to examine it, their not receiving revelation may be excused, if they can make it appear at the bar of Him, to whom all things are naked and manifest, that such was their case ; yet nothing can excuse their rejecting it, and their zeal to induce others to reject it, but seeing clearly something in it that is absolutely inconsistent with reason, or with itself. And though upon these grounds we may have many sceptics,

yet I think there will not be a great number of real Deists.

From what has been said, I think, it appears plainly, that the gross misrepresentation of the sense of revelation has been one of the greatest causes of scepticism and of real Deism. Whether that misrepresentation be made by venting absurd and superstitious notions, or by superstitious practices, which suppose these notions and propagate them, makes no difference. Let no man then complain, that doubts about revelation, or the disbelief of it, spread so far, or produce the fruits we daily see, who will not set himself to rectify every misrepresentation that has been made of it. And let not him that will not set himself about this great work in good earnest; and, above all, let not him that cherishes any of these absurdities, or any degree of superstition, think, that he has any right to complain of the growth either of scepticism or real Deism. On the contrary, let him expect nothing less than that something of a much more fatal nature will spring up in its neighbourhood. The religion of Deists is true religion, though they want the aid of revelation, to enable them the better to perform the duties of their religion. But superstition will as certainly make Atheism spring up in the minds of the loose and immoral, as it makes Deism grow in the minds of sober and thoughtful men: I

mean, of men who think superficially, without thinking thoroughly. And woe be to him, whose absurdities and superstition make either of these opinions, but particularly the last, like the most noxious weeds, become more rank and prolific ! When, instead of these absurd and superstitious misrepresentations of revelation, believers will condescend to profess the doctrines, pay the worship, and practise the duties of revelation in its original simplicity, and after the model of the great deliverers of it ; then, and not till then, may we expect, that all the virtuous and thoughtful Deists will attend to the external evidence of Christianity, that has been so admirably well brought together by several able hands, of late, in order the better to support it. But it will be well if, instead of this condescension, some, who would be very angry if they were not allowed to be amongst the best friends of revelation, are not more incensed at him who, out of a disinterested regard to truth (now that revelation is under so strict a trial), offers this reflection to their cool and serious consideration, than at those very Deists, who make it so necessary to lay it before them.

SECTION V.—*A rational and consistent view of Christianity, the best cure of Deism.—Various systems of Scriptural interpretation.*

If the great cause of disbelief be such misrepresentations of revelation as have made men think it unnecessary to attend to it, or necessary to oppose it; it is obvious that the first, if not the best, thing that can be done to stop the growth of that disbelief, will be to give a true representation of revelation; so that it may appear to be, what it really is, a rational, consistent, and beautiful scheme of useful knowledge, and enamour every rational inquirer with it. From such a representation of it, we shall be best able to prove its truth, and to answer the objections which acute men may raise against it. We shall make also the virtuous and thoughtful Deists, from some relish of it (instead of the distaste they had to it), be willing carefully to attend to every thing that shall be offered in support of it; especially such of them as have not themselves leisure, capacity, or inclination, to come at those proofs, or to make such a system or representation of revelation from the Bible.

Every one knows, that there have been various systems and compends of revelation offered to the world; and many of them, no doubt, for this purpose. But I must own, that though,

among those which have fallen in my way, I have seen several to which, I believe, the growth of Deism may be justly attributed, in this prying age, from their great inconsistency with reason and revelation ; yet I have not met with any that has, in my apprehension, closely followed the prevailing notion, the method, or the language of the Bible. And yet it is certain, that none but one that does this, can, from the very form of it, be calculated to answer the good end proposed ; even if the matter of it was ever so consistent with, or agreeable to, the doctrines of the Bible.

In order to represent the sense of the Bible, several authors have adopted a figurative or metaphorical divinity ; and among them some have not been wanting to pursue these figures in a very wild, luscious, and offensive manner. Metaphors and allegories, indeed, are justly and beautifully used in the poetical and rhetorical books of Scripture ; but those figures themselves at best always want a key, instead of opening the sense that is couched under them.

Others have run into abstracted and metaphysical notions ; which when they are not founded in the nature of things, such as the schoolmen used, are ridiculous ; and when they are, yet are not of a piece with Scripture ; which generally represents things by no other

ideas, than such as are most common and familiar to us ; as being alone suited to the bulk of mankind, for whose benefit it is designed.

Others, indeed, have represented the scheme of revelation under notions which are common and familiar, as well as scriptural ; but then they are such as are either only topical, that is to say, used in particular texts of the Bible ; or else such as are only suited to particular periods and dispensations. Under this head, to pass by other systems, those (which have been of the best design) may be ranged, which have treated divinity under the notion of a covenant, of a kingdom, or of the Christian church.

Those who have written systems of revealed religion in any of these methods, have, besides the faults peculiar to each of them, been guilty of one which has been common to them all ; namely, that they have composed them according to the rules in which the systems of other arts and sciences are dressed up : but this method can never make those systems of a piece with a revelation, which has not been delivered to mankind at once, as a complete system of knowledge ; but by gradual discoveries, during the space of above four thousand years, each of which still led to another.

And though several divines have avoided these mistaken methods, when they have handled

particular subjects of divinity ; the Scriptures having been very carefully studied of late in a just and critical way, to the great honour of the present age, and in which some have outshone all that have gone before them ; yet we have not been favoured with a finished piece of this kind, or so much as with a sketch of it.

Those who have come the nearest to what I aim at, and who ought to have great merit with all who study their Bible, are the divines who have considered revelation historically ; the way in which revelation has been conveyed to mankind. But then such discourses as these are to be considered only as histories ; which will indeed be of great use to him that will offer a scriptural system to the world, but are not that system itself ; nor may not even help those who compose them, or are instructed by them, to the notion on which that system should be built.

SECTION VI.—*Object of the following Essay, to point out the one great design, uniformly pursued, through the whole of revelation.*

But the sketch I aim at is such an one as will shew THE SINGLE NOTION, that runs through the several dispensations of God to mankind in its full light (if it shall appear that there is such a notion), and that it pursues it in

the precise order and manner in which it was exhibited in those several dispensations, and will at the same time shew, how all the peculiar doctrines of revelation refer to it. For such a sketch alone will discover to us all the beauties of revealed truth; shewing it in its proper connection, and in all its relations (particularly its use and advantage), and in its unity, the strongest internal evidence that can accompany it.

How well soever therefore others have deserved in their several provinces, yet still, observing the great use as well as the want of such an undertaking as I have just now mentioned, I have been led to offer a rough draught of this kind to the public; in hopes it may receive amendments from others, if it be capable of it; or that it may engage those of greater leisure and ability, when they fling this away, to substitute a better in its room.

It has been extremely well observed, by a writer of fine taste in this controversy, that enthusiasm never deals much in facts; on which however all the Jewish as well as the Christian revelation is wholly built. But let us try this matter by another touchstone, which will better serve our present purpose; for we are considering, whether the whole of revelation be enthusiasm, and not whether one or two great branches of it only be so or no. Now enthusiasm, in the nature of the thing, can have no unity. And

let the Deists show us in fact, if they can, a set of enthusiastic writers who (if they are at all intelligible) are at unity with any considerable number of their predecessors in former ages ; or so much as a single enthusiast, who is consistent with himself through many volumes, or through a single volume, or it may be even a single page of his enthusiastic compositions. If it shall appear then, that there is one worthy and noble design pursued through the books of the Old and New Testament, by one wise, plain, and simple mean, though they had forty or more different authors, and were not written in less than sixteen hundred years ; it will amount to the clearest demonstration, that the Bible cannot be the work of enthusiasts writing in different ages. And will not every one then see, that it must be from Him who exists through all ages, and sees what is past, present, and to come ; who has always the same view, must have fixed on the wisest methods to attain it, and yet must suit His discoveries to the different circumstances of those to whom He makes them, if their circumstances vary from each other, as they must in a tract of many ages be supposed to do ? If any one should say, that the writers of the Old and New Testament have thought of some probabilities, and then couched them in dark, general, and indeterminate expressions, capable of being differently accom-

modated and applied ; and that succeeding writers have consulted the former, and endeavoured to imitate them in such dark, general, and indeterminate expressions, with an intent not only that they might be differently accommodated and applied in future times, but also that they might bear some relation to former books ; I say, he that pretends to allege this, entirely quits the hypothesis of enthusiasm, in order to overthrow revelation ; and has recourse to the exploded hypothesis of imposture : for representing the writers of the Old and New Testament to have acted, as the Deists in this view suppose them to have done, is representing them not as hot-headed, mad enthusiasts ; who, borne away with their present impulse, never stop to consider any thing (former writings, or their own), but as the most cool-headed designing knaves.

The one design I have mentioned, as running through the Bible, I take, with all other writers on this subject, to be the displaying the glory of all God's perfections, particularly His moral perfections ; or, which will come to the same thing, to assist our reason in doing what is right and fit, and thereby pursuing our own happiness, and promoting the happiness of others, in the best manner we can, as long as our being lasts, and as long as we have other beings about us. I take this design to be uniformly pursued

by one wise, plain, and simple mean, plot, or contrivance, calculated to strike every man that has the use of his reason; though there are various underplots, if I may be allowed to use the expression, to support the main one, suited to the incidents of mankind, and beautifully related, and proportioned to each other: which, as far as I know, has not been taken notice of. Now, if such a design, thus pursued, shall appear to run evidently through the books of the Old and New Testament, a man may, with infinitely greater propriety, suppose the most perfect drama (where the finest design is carried on by the best chosen plot, by the most consistent underplots, and beautiful, well-proportioned incidents) to have been written by a number of the greatest madmen or idiots, by piece-meal, in different ages, than imagine a thread of such an end and mean running through above forty writers, in more than sixteen hundred years, to be the work of so many enthusiasts. Or we may as well suppose the world to be framed by mere chance; or, which will strike all but philosophical minds more, the most magnificent, beautiful, and convenient palace, that the imagination can figure to itself, to be built by men unacquainted with all the rules of architecture, in several ages, and without any model to build by, and to be supported by mere chance, through as many more ages, as imagine

such an unity of design and mean as I have described to be the result of enthusiasm and accident mixed together.

I have already hinted at some considerations which shew the hypothesis of forgery, by which some Deists have endeavoured to account for revelation, to be a very absurd one. But let us farther examine that hypothesis of revelation by this unity, which I have just now observed to run through it. And here I would desire the Deists to consider, how hard and difficult it is to observe unity in any piece of mere fiction, where the writer aims at unity with the closest intention. This we may easily learn from the dramatic writers of all kinds, especially if their plot be all fiction and not story ; who, though they have this unity ever in view, yet often depart from it : as we may easily see by reading them, or at least by reading those who give us their criticisms upon them. And let any one, who is used to Italian or merchants' accompts (as they are called), see, whether they can ever depart in the least from truth in them, without feeling that departure themselves, or shewing it to others that narrowly inspect them ; though the departure be not such as vitiates the accompt, or hinders the whole ledger from being exactly balanced at last ; and where therefore of consequence the main of the accompt must be true. Now, if it be so difficult to observe

unity in a mere fiction, or where there is a great degree of fiction attending it, even in any single dramatic performance, though the author applies himself to observe it never so carefully; and if it be so impossible to mix any, even the least, falsehood with the truth of accompts, without that falsehood's appearing plainly, though it is not such as destroys the balance of the book (so little will truth and falsehood ever agree); how can any one imagine the books of the Old and New Testament to be forgery, any more than enthusiasm, when nothing but unity and agreement appears in such a number of writers at so great distance of time from each other; and that not only in the main, but (when all just allowances are made for books circumstanced as they are) even in the detail of particulars?

Thus, in my opinion, it appears, that such a sketch as I have mentioned is the best way to explain revelation, and to support it, till a finished piece of the same design shall appear. And I wish, if any great master shall go about it, he would particularly set the proportions of revelation in such a light, as that their exactness, beauty, and relations, might strike every one that casts his eye on the performance. And by the proportions of revelation, I mean not only those proportions which appear in every dispensation of God to mankind, consi-

dered apart and by itself, but in the several dispensations as they bear a relation to each other. In order to explain my meaning the better about these proportions, I will give an instance of some which are very considerable, in the second corollary, at the end of this Essay.

If this rough draught of revelation induce men to lay aside their prejudices against it, and embrace it, at a time when it undergoes so strict a disquisition ; it will answer all I design by it, besides the instruction and satisfaction of my own mind.

Whatever opinion the reader may form of this work, he may be fully assured, that I have dealt sincerely with him, and have given him my thoughts without the least regard to any thing but the Bible, as far as I can understand it ; according to the very same rules by which I should endeavour to understand any other ancient history. To his judgment they are submitted. If this Essay may happily prove an occasion of making the doctrines of revelation better understood and better relished, and the duties it so powerfully enforces better practised, it answers the warmest wishes I have about it.

AN ESSAY

ON THE SEVERAL DISPENSATIONS OF GOD TO
MANKIND, AS THEY LIE IN THE BIBLE.

SECTION I.—*The reflections, knowledge, and rules of conduct, which might have influenced our first parents, if revelation had not been imparted to them.*

IN order to give a distinct account of the various methods in which God has extraordinarily discovered Himself to mankind (which have been fitly enough called His dispensations towards them), it will be necessary to begin with that which is the first, and which naturally leads to all the rest.

The methods in which God hath extraordinarily discovered Himself to mankind, as they will chiefly fall under the present consideration, are those methods by which He has conveyed farther knowledge to mankind than they could arrive at by the bare use of the natural powers He has given them. For though all those doc-

trines, precepts, examples, and motives, which are contained in the Bible, are matters which God has conveyed the knowledge of to us in an extraordinary manner ; yet I shall not generally consider such of them as we might have acquired the notices of by the use of our own rational faculties, but only such as were above our discovery, and are therefore to be considered as a revelation from God, for the matter, as well as the manner of conveying them to us. I call them *extraordinary* discoveries, for want of a better word to express my meaning ; *immediate*, which some have used, not being a proper word to this purpose, since it restrains these discoveries to those which, in a larger or stricter sense, may be said to have been immediately made by God to the person or persons to whom He made them ; whereas I would take in such discoveries as He has made by the mediation of angels or of prophets, or such discoveries as have been conveyed down to others, from those to whom they have been either mediately or immediately made. All these extraordinary discoveries go under the name of revelation ; and by that term I shall for the future generally express them.

The first of these dispensations every one will presently see must be the state in which God created our first parents, and which is

known by the name of the State of Innocence, or of the state before the fall.

And in this state itself it will be necessary to consider what was previous to any revelation from God to them ; at least, what was previous to any such revelation in the order of things (however it might be in the order of time), before we consider such revelation.

For though it does not necessarily result from the nature of God, or of man, that God should make extraordinary discoveries of His will to mankind ; yet it necessarily results from the nature of both, that when God gave man understanding, will, and active powers, He must make man subject to a rule, in order to direct his choice and conduct.

For whatever necessarily resulted from the make and frame of that nature which God had given man, and the circumstances in which God had placed him, would be that rule to him.

Thus the rule of self-government, or temperance, would immediately appear to him ; because an improper indulgence of his appetites (or intemperance) would appear to be quite contrary to his make and frame : for his make and frame plainly required him to yield to his appetites, where he saw that yielding to them was for his preservation, and the regular propagation of

the species ; not where they would be to his, or their, hurt or destruction.

Thus also, if he found himself surrounded with other creatures, even that were of an order below him, he must see, that if they were endued with powers of feeling pleasure and pain, he ought not to deprive them of pleasure, or inflict pain unnecessarily. And if he was so happy as to find other creatures of the same rank with himself about him, he must see, that they having rights as well as he, he ought not to infringe them ; and that, as his own happiness or misery would be increased by theirs, he consequently owed them a constant and perpetual good-will.

And when he once came to consider, as he soon must, that there was a Being supremely powerful, wise, and good, to whom he and all other beings owed their existence ; unless he would suppose, that there were effects without a cause, which is the highest contradiction ; he must immediately consider temperance not only to be due to himself, and benevolence to others, as they flow from his own frame and make, and the circumstances in which he was placed, but as what was thereby expressed to be the will of his Maker, who had given him that frame and make, and placed him in those circumstances ; and therefore must consider temperance and benevolence as due to himself and others, by virtue of the law of his Maker.

And he must then likewise presently see, that the highest veneration, gratitude, obedience, submission, and resignation, were universally, constantly, and perpetually to be paid to such a Being, as long as his own existence continued.

SECTION II.—*Revelation was granted to Adam, as a safer guide than reason. The peculiar dignity of our first parent as the son of God.*

These reflections therefore either arose in the minds of the first man and woman, or at least would have arisen in their minds on the least attention, if they were not anticipated by revelation. But as revelation does not give us an account of any such anticipation, it does not seem likely that in fact there was any such thing ; since God does nothing in vain in the moral world any more than in the natural, and therefore is not likely to have revealed that to our first parents, which they might easily have come to the knowledge of without any revelation.

Whenever these reflections arose in their minds, it would also occur to them, that the law which God had given them, as resulting from His will who had given them such a frame and make, and placed them in such circumstances, was so perfectly adjusted to their nature and

situation, that it was right and fit for them to regulate their temper and conduct by it; and not only from the reason and fitness of things, but to be thereby as happy as the state they were placed in would allow, or as happy as they could be in any given circumstances, as long as their being continued; and that therefore, if they deviated from this rule, they would lose the advantage that attended the observing it, and meet with some inconveniences that attended the departing from it: so that these advantages and inconveniences may be considered as the natural sanctions of the law of nature.

But, besides the happiness that would result from observing this law, it was highly suitable and congruous, that a reasonable being, who came innocent and perfect out of the hands of God, should be placed in additional circumstances of dignity and felicity. He had no other father but God. He was created in His moral image and likeness: he was therefore His son by creation; and, whilst he preserved his duty and obedience, it was fit he should be placed in a state that became so high a relation; or, more particularly, that he that resembled Him in His moral, should also resemble Him in some of His high natural perfections; namely, dominion and immortality, and in the glory and bliss that should accompany or result from them.

It may be here proper to consider in ohw many senses God is said to be a Father in Scripture; and under one of them, we shall see, in what sense He is particularly said to be the Father of Adam. God is said to be a Father in Scripture,

I. As He is the Creator, 1. of all things, and gave them being. So St. Paul, when he says, "To us there is but one God," immediately adds, as a description of Him, "The Father, of whom are all things." So likewise, Eph. iv. 6, "One God and Father of all." This is the signification of the word in its utmost extent, reaching to things rational and irrational, animate and inanimate. 2. As He is the Creator of all rational beings: thus Eph. iii. 15, "the Father—of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." So God is also called "the Father of spirits," Heb. xii. 19. And thus we are called "His offspring," Acts xvii. 29. But though both these senses are more extensive than any other used in Scripture, yet they occur but very rarely. 3. As He is the Creator of all rational beings, who have no other father but Himself, their Creator, and resembling Him in virtue, are possessed of dominion, bliss, glory, and immortality. Such are the angels; who are therefore called "sons of God," Job i. 6, xxxviii. 7, and Dan. iii. 25, "Nebuchadnezzar saw four men loose.—And the form of

the fourth," says he, "is like *a son* of God ;" i. e. like an angel, as the same person is styled, ver. 28. And in this sense it is, that Adam is called "a son of God," Luke iii. 38. I say a son of God : for *υιὸς*, ver. 23, and that is understood in the 38th verse, as well as in all the verses between the 23d and the 38th, is without the article. And if Adam was a son of God, God was the Father of Adam. St. Luke did not only learn from Moses's history, that God immediately created Adam ; so as that while others mentioned in that chapter had such and such for their fathers, Adam had no other father, but God ; but must from thence infer, that coming immediately out of the hands of God, he resembled Him in virtue : and was farther informed from that history, that God created him "in His own image," Gen. i. 26, and placed him in a blissful garden, with the tree of life in it ; and with dominion over all the works of His hands ; and clothed with a glory, as a garment of dignity, the badge of his relation to God, and of all his felicity. A point on which I shall say more below. So that there is all the reason in the world to conclude, that when St. Luke used this expression concerning Adam ; viz. that "he was a son of God," he used it in the full sense which I have given it. This may also farther be concluded from hence ; that all, to whom God is

said to be a Father in Scripture (unless it be in the places, where His paternity is to be taken in the two first senses, or in the sense that will be considered next, and which are but very few), are such only as have dominion, bliss, glory, and immortality in possession: or a right to them in reversion. For this reason it is, that all the “sons of the resurrection are sons of God,” Luke xx. 37. And from hence it is also, that “the image of God,” in the Old and New Testament, generally, if not every where, signifies the representation of God’s dominion. See Gen. ix. 6. 1 Cor. xi. 6. 2 Cor. iv. 4. Colos. i. 15. See also to this purpose, Ecclesiastic. xvii. 3, 4. And from hence it is likewise, that princes are figuratively (a part being put for the whole) called “the sons of God:” especially such as exercise their dominion with justice and mercy, Psal. lxxxii. 7. John x. 33—37, though they are not possessed of bliss, glory, or immortality.

II. God is said to be the Father of Israel, and calls Israel His first-born, Exod. iv. 22, having adopted him to Canaan, the inheritance of the first-born; to which he had no other right; while Esau had only Seir for a possession. But even when God became a Father to Israel in this sense, it was to assure him of His being ready to become a Father in an higher sense; viz. that which follows. For,

III. God is said to be the Father of all, who being born "sons of men," in their likeness, after their image (according to Gen. vi. 2), strangers to God, and heirs of the curse, are brought by repentance to be renewed after the image of God, i. e. to imitate and obey God, to depend on His protection, submit to His providence, and to resign themselves to all His future disposals; and thereupon to have a right by God's adoption to immortality, bliss, glory, and dominion, as their inheritance, through a resurrection from the dead. These are called the adopted sons of God, in opposition to angels and Adam in innocence, the created sons of God, as mentioned before. In this sense it is that God is most usually called Father in the Bible; viz. an adopting Father; and that we are called His sons: sometimes under the notion of our being born (or begotten, as it should be always rendered) of God, James i. 18. 1 Pet. i. 3. 1 John iv. 9. v. 1. 4. 8. 18; "Not by corruptible seed, but by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever:" or under the notion of being "created by God through Christ Jesus to good works:" Eph. ii. 10. iv. 24. 2 Cor. v. 17. Gal. vi. 15; in which there is a manifest allusion to God's being the Father of angels and Adam, by creating them in the manner that I have just now mentioned: or of being like to God, and renewed after His image;

Gen. i. 26. 1 Cor. xi. 7. Rom. xii. 2. Colos. iii. 10. Eph. iv. 23. Tit. iii. 5. The complete notion of an adopted son of God in Scripture always includes both these ideas: viz. of being like God in disposition, and of being entitled to the inheritance of a son of God, from Him: but, by a common figure, one of these is sometimes put for the other: as when it is said, "If sons, then heirs," Rom. viii. 17. Gal. iv. 7. And so on the other hand, when it is said, that "our adoption is the redemption of our bodies," Rom. viii. 29. Nor can it be supposed otherwise, than that likeness to God in disposition always enters into the notion of a son of God by adoption; since all adopted, as well as natural sons, among men, are ever supposed to imitate the manners of the family, to which they belong: insomuch that in the Hebrew language, they are said not only to be the sons of the person whom they resemble; as is plain in the case of the children of Abraham, of God, and of the devil; of this world, of Belial, &c.; but they are said to be the sons of the thing, to which they bear a similitude or resemblance; as is plain in such expressions as these, which are frequent in Scripture; "sons of sorrow and affliction, sons of peace, and sons of violence, sons of thunder, sons of wickedness, sons of death, and sons of perdition."

IV. God is said to be the Father of our Lord

Jesus Christ, as He begat Him (that is to say, a body for Him) in the womb of the Virgin Mary, Luke i. 35, and as He begat Him to universal and perpetual dominion, ver. 32, 33. And God is said in a figurative sense, to have begot Him, “when He raised Him from the dead;” because then He, in the most public manner, declared to all men, by making Him the first-fruits of them that sleep, that He had begot Him in the womb of the Virgin Mary, to universal and perpetual dominion: I say, because He then declared it as much, as if He had begot Him that very day. Thus God is a Father by creation, adoption, and generation to a temporal, or an everlasting possession: and these are the four senses in which God is said to be a Father in Scripture.

V. There is but one exception, that I remember; which is, that God is once in the New Testament called our Father, as He is our Teacher, Matth. xxiii. 9, “And call no man father upon earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.”

SECTION III.—*The great dignity, and probable external appearance of Adam before his fall.*

From various positive expressions, or from plain hints, in the account of Moses, we find that Adam was thus created in the image of God. We

find that God blessed him, and placed him in a most pleasant fruitful garden,¹ free from toil, care, and vexation, with dominion over the works of God's hands. I am of opinion also that he was clothed with a glory (as a proper badge of his high relation to God, and of the power and dominion God had given him), and vested with a body capable of immortality by means of the tree of life.

I will endeavour to prove, that Adam and Eve were clothed with a glory in Paradise, by shewing, 1. That they were clothed, when they were there. 2. That the garment they were clothed with was a glory.

That they were clothed, when they were in Paradise, appears, because "they were naked (before the fall), and were not ashamed," Gen. ii. 25; and because they became naked immediately after their fall, Gen. iii. 7. 10. It will follow therefore, that they had a garment or covering between these two periods.—And indeed if they had not, why is it said, after they had eaten of the forbidden fruit, "that his and his wife's eyes were opened, and they saw that

¹ Pleasant and fruitful garden] This garden was in Eden, a country in Chaldea, Isa. xxxv. 12. Ezek. xxvii. 23. Eden signifies pleasure; whence the Greeks name pleasure *ἡδονή*. But Eden signifies the garden itself, in the Rabbinical writings. The LXX call it Paradise, from the Hebrew word *Paradise*, which signifies "an orchard."

they were naked ;” that is, destitute of the garment that had covered them ? And which must have been a robe worthy of their high rank, and of their happy state and condition ; and, as I apprehend, the badge of them. God had shewn them the tree of knowledge of good and evil ; and told them, that “ in the day they did eat of it, they should surely die.” The serpent had told them, that if they would but eat of it, their eyes should be opened, and “ they should be as God, knowing good and evil :” i. e. knowing the means how to be indefeasibly possessed of the one, and inviolably secured against the other ; particularly against death, which had been threatened : an evil, which must for ever deprive them of all good. So God knows good and evil. But, says the historian, “ When they had eaten the forbidden fruit, so far was this vain, delusory, and impious promise of the Devil from being made good to them, and so fully on the other hand was God’s threatening verified, that their eyes were only opened (beyond what they had been before), to see the evil and misery they had brought upon themselves.” All which was at once visible to them, when they found themselves stripped of the godlike robe that covered them : which he expresses by their “ seeing themselves naked ;” a nakedness, that what they girt about their loins could by no means hide. For to this

purpose it is, that when God asked Adam, "where he was;" even after they had made them aprons (or *coats to gird about them*), he says in answer, "I hid myself, because I was naked." As naked (in Moses's sense of nakedness) after they had made themselves aprons, as before; ver. 10. 7. Adam farther says, that "he was *afraid*." That it was a garment of his dignity (a badge of his dominion, bliss and immortality), seems also to be plainly implied in this, that his fear proceeded from his nakedness; or from finding himself stripped of his garment: Otherwise I cannot conceive, how his nakedness should make him afraid. On the supposition, that it was a garment of dignity (a badge of his filial relation to God), it is obvious how his being stripped of it made him afraid. For he then must needs see, that God was not now his Father, nor he His son; since he was stripped of the badge of that high relation. Moreover, Is not this implied in God's reply? Which I apprehend amounts to this, "How camest thou to be naked?" and so, to know that thou wast naked? "Hast thou eaten of the forbidden tree?" Does not this imply, that God had told him, when He gave him that prohibition, or when He gave him that garment, that if they broke through this prohibition, they should be stripped of that garment? This is the more probable, because we find, that after

their transgression, God made them coats, of the skins of beasts, not only to clothe them, but in order to shew them, to how low a state they had reduced themselves, by yielding to their appetites and passions against the plain reason of things. It held forth this sad moral to them, that man being in honour without understanding, was like the beasts that perish.

Besides, if a glory be, or is to be, in some sort the garment of all the sons of God, who is Himself the Father of glory; or rather, if their bodies are to be bodies of glory, whether they are sons by creation, as the angels and Adam; or by adoption, as the saints; or by generation, as the Son of God, as the case certainly is; it should seem highly probable, that since Adam's body was not a body of glory, as the bodies of all the other sons of God are, or are to be; but an earthly body, made of the dust of the ground; that the garment of dignity, that covered his earthly body, was a glory; since he also was a son of God. These are the chief hints, that we have of this matter from the Old Testament. But there are plainer references to it in the New. We find several expressions there, that refer clearly to this garment of glory. St. Paul tells the Romans, that "all men want it" (or are now without it), having sinned. *Πάντες γὰρ ἥμαρτον, καὶ ὑστεροῦνται τῆς δόξης τοῦ Θεοῦ*, Rom. iii. 23. Castalio renders it

justly : *Nam omnes peccaverunt, divinaque gloria carent.* And this is the *glory*, which St. Paul also says, “they all seek for,” as well as “honour, and immortality, through a patient continuance in well-doing,” Rom. ii. 7. Or if the All there relates to the Jews only, yet I know no other glory, that the Jews had any revelation of, before the gospel, or could be said to seek after. This garment of glory is the same, in some sort, with the celestial House, which St. Paul tells the Corinthians “he groaned after, when the earthly house of this tabernacle should be dissolved :” not that he desired “to be unclothed, and found naked (as Adam was, when he was stripped of this divine garment) ; “but clothed upon” with this glory, 2 Cor. v. 1—5. But indeed there is this difference, that while Adam’s garment of dignity was only a garment of glory, that covered an earthly body ; St. Paul was to lose his earthly body, and have a body of glory in the stead of it : which he, agreeably to the figure used there, calls “an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. The earthly house of this tabernacle, which he wanted to be taken down, was *the sinful flesh*, that he had in common with the rest of mankind,” i. e. flesh not covered with a glory ; and which he tells us, “God sent His own Son in *the likeness of*,” Rom. viii. 3. If that be not the meaning of *sinful flesh* in that last

place, *sinful* has no emphasis, but is a word purely redundant. I take sinful flesh in that last place to be the same thing with what he calls the body of our humiliation, Phil. iii. ult. (τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν); the body deprived of the glory that originally belonged to it; and which stands opposed to Christ's body of glory (τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ), to which our body of humiliation is at the resurrection to be conformed. Our body of humiliation is the same with what he says of the body, 1 Cor. xv. 43: "It is sown in *dishonour* (or deprived of its true honour, σπείρεται ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ), in opposition to its being raised in glory (ἐγείρεται ἐν δόξῃ). The body, which, he says, is "after the first Adam, who was of the earth earthy;" in opposition to the body, that we are to receive "from the Lord from heaven," ver. 47—50. Finally, I take the want of this glorious garment to be the form of a slave, in which Christ is said to have appeared, Phil. ii. 6. Which form of a slave is explained there to be the likeness of men, or the fashion and guise of men; men now appearing as slaves in sinful dishonourable flesh, without the glory, that belonged to Adam, as a Son of God, and that is the badge of dominion, and in which, among other things, the form of a God (the μορφή Θεοῦ), of which Christ emptied Himself, did consist, Phil. ii. 6—9.

Such are the reasons which persuade them that our first parent was clothed with some external glory, as an earthly son of God." 1 Cor. xv. 44—50. Adam is said to "be of the earth earthy." Adam's body was made of the ground, Gen. ii. 7. It was an animal, weak, torpid, corruptible body, like ours; to be repaired by sleep, food, and exercise; and to propagate its species. Only it was covered with a glory (whereas ours is *σῶμα ἄτιμον*, 1 Cor. xv. 43), and to be preserved by the tree of life. This, I apprehend, is the full meaning of St. Paul, when he says, the first Adam "was of the earth earthy;" in opposition to the bodies we are to receive from the second Adam, "the Lord from heaven;" viz. bodies, that are spiritual (i. e. without our appetites and propensions), powerful, and active, glorious, and immortal.

In this sense and meaning is Adam called emphatically "a son of God,"¹ and not barely as God created him, for so He did all things; or as He created him a living soul, or a being endued with rational powers; for so He did all angels, bad as well as good, and would therefore be the Father of the one as well as the other.

¹ Luke iii. 38.

SECTION IV.—*The knowledge of food, marriage, and language, essential, and imparted to, our first parents.*

God, who, as the tender Father of our first parents, had given them such additional circumstances of dignity and felicity, cannot be supposed to have been wanting in any thing that was necessary for their subsistence and comfort; and therefore, as it might be very necessary to supply their want of experience with a law about their food for their own preservation, and about marriage for propagating the species, we meet with an account of the first, Gen. i. 29. ii. 9, and of the second, chap. ii. 22, 23. It is highly probable too, that they were endued with a language at once, which could not have been formed by themselves in many years.

This is what we are told, Ecclesiasticus xvii. 5. And supposing them to be endued with a language at once, in order to converse with God and with one another, for their mutual comfort and instruction; it may be as easily conceived, as the confounding of the language of the builders at Babel, and the giving the knowledge of so many tongues in the apostolic times.

God gave them the law of food and matrimony by language, together with other disco-

veries of His will; ¹ and that Adam gave names to the fowls of the air, and to the cattle, and wild beasts of the field; ² and also that the man and the woman conversed with God, with the serpent, and with one another. ³ Nor can God, who so kindly provided every thing else for their happiness, be supposed to have been wanting in this respect. For without a language, what society or comfort could there possibly have been between the first pair, or between them and their descendants ?

SECTION V.—*The promise of immortality, and the certainty of moral obligation, enforced by means of the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.*

However, though Adam was created a rational being, innocent or perfect, and placed in the happy, blissful, and glorious circumstances I have mentioned, yet he could not positively assure himself how long his being, or these happy, blissful, and glorious circumstances, would last, or that he should have any considerable term in them granted to him: for being itself was what he had no right to, nor the additional degrees of bliss and glory, which

¹ Gen. i. 28. ii. 16—19. iii. 8—12. 14—22.

² Ibid. ii. 19, 20.

³ See the places just quoted, and chap. iii. 1—6.

attended it; nor had he any right to the continuance of either. Here therefore a farther revelation was most of all wanting, in order to his receiving a proper threatening and promise, the most powerful motives to obedience. God was accordingly pleased to give them to him, and to let him know, that, though his life was but terrestrial and animal, and therefore corruptible, yet it should be continually restored and preserved (together with the dominion, glory, and bliss, which accompanied it), in case he continued perfectly dutiful and obedient, by means of one of the trees of the garden that God had given him for food, the tree of life.

The life of a man is consciousness and activity in a body. For Adam to live on, was to continue to be what he was; a soul breathed into the body, the principle of consciousness and activity, and actually animating and conducting the body.

The tree of life is a tree that could preserve that life.

And that the tree of life was a tree that bore leaves, or a fruit of a preservative and healing nature, in case of any injury received, Rev. xxii. 3, and that would have preserved man, who was of a mortal and mouldering frame, to immortality; may appear from these considerations: 1. From the grant of it being found in the grant of food, Gen. ii. 16, 17. 2. From the name,

which we ought rather to suppose to be expressive of the nature of the thing, as a tree that would continue life, than to denote a tree, that could only figuratively be called a tree of life, at it was a symbol or a pledge of life; unless we were forced to put such a figurative and unnatural interpretation upon it. 3. From what God says of it, Gen. iii. 22, “Let us drive out the man, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and live for ever:” which we have no reason to suppose was spoken ironically. 4. From God’s barring the way to the tree of life for the future to Adam and all his posterity, by placing cherubims, together with a glory, like a flaming sword, to guard the way to it, ver. 24, plainly intimating to mankind, that there was no way to heal the hurt they had received, so as that they should escape death. 5. From what God says, when He is pronouncing the curse on Adam, Gen. iii. 19, giving this as a reason why he should return to dust; viz. because he was dust, or taken out of the dust: “For dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return.” Which words seem to imply thus much: “Thy frame is but of an earthy nature, liable therefore to separation and corruption; though I designed to have preserved and kept it together by the tree of life: but as thou hast eaten of the tree of death, and I now design to drive thee, and bar thee from the tree

of life, that grows in this garden, which might have healed thee ; to dust thou shalt, or thou naturally wilt, return." Otherwise it would follow, that if our first parents had continued in Paradise, they would have died. For if they had continued there, yet they were but dust.

6. From God's taking Enoch to Paradise, and shewing him the tree of life, as the means of his immortality. 7. This was understood to be the meaning of the tree of life by the Jews. That is plain from allusions to it in their sacred writings, Prov. iii. 18, "Wisdom is a tree of life to all that lay hold on her." The meaning is, that by wisdom we shall obtain life. And the expression cannot have any foundation, but in allusion to this tree. So likewise, Prov. xi. 30. xxiii. 12. xv. 14. And in allusion to this it is, that Josephus introduces the mother of the seven sons in the Maccabees, comforting them with these words of Solomon, "Wisdom is a tree of life to them that do her will." Joseph. de Macc. p. 110. We have a similar allusion to this in the Proverbs, more fully and clearly in the Revelations : "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God," Rev. ii. 7. The tree of life here signifies life or immortality, ch. xxii. 2. "It bears twelve manner of fruits, and fresh fruit every month ;" to shew, that there will be no failure of its fruit,

and that the fruit will always be in the greatest perfection: which is to signify, that the immortality of those, who can take of its fruit, will be preserved. It is said to grow in the midst of the street of this heavenly Jerusalem (or the Jerusalem that comes down from heaven), in allusion to its growing in the midst of the garden, Gen. ii. 9. And it is said to grow on each side of the river, that runs through the street of the heavenly Jerusalem; to shew, that all may have constant and easy access to it. Farther, its leaves are said to be for the healing of the nations, that is, of the hurt they had received by Adam's eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And when they are represented as healed, it is immediately added, that "there shall be no more curse," ver. 3, as there had been on Adam and Eve, after their being placed in the garden. And it is likewise added, ver. 5, "That there shall be no more night:" which there was in Paradise, where the evening and morning made every day, Gen. i. 31. The night being then, as well as now, made for rest, and the day for labour. Finally, it is said, ver. 14, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, for they shall have a right to eat of the tree of life," i. e. shall have a right to immortality. All these observations plainly shew that relation, which the tree of life in the Revelations, bears to the original

tree of life in Eden ; and the allusion to it, as a tree preserving life. 8. This meaning of the tree of life is the more probable, because it makes the history of the fall appear a real history, and not a parable, which it must seem unnatural to suppose an account to be, that is related by an historian, who gives us an account of facts, not parables, in all the rest of his writings ; and above all, that is the foundation of all the rest of his history, and indeed of all future revelation. For such every one must allow the history of the fall to be.

While the tree of life thus promised immortality to Adam, he was assured on the other hand, that he would lose that immortality by yielding to his appetites and passions, instead of obeying the law of God ; and particularly, if he should but taste of “ the tree of knowledge of good and evil,” which may not be improperly called the tree of death.

If life be consciousness and activity in a body, death must be the conscious principle ceasing to be conscious, and to animate and conduct the body in virtue of this sentence. If the soul, at death, did not cease to be conscious, as well as to animate and conduct the body, in virtue of this sentence, death, or ceasing to live, could have been no punishment ; but the contrary. For being conscious without a body would be existing in a more perfect manner

than with a body; more like to the Supreme Being Himself, who is mind without body.

The tree of death was a tree of a noxious and deadly fruit, that would poison the blood, and sooner or later bring death on those that should eat it. But perhaps, instead of being noxious to other animals, it might be proper food or physic for them.

Now, that the tree of knowledge of good and evil was a tree that bore such a deadly fruit, may appear from the following considerations: 1. As has been already said of the tree of life, that the grant of that is found among the laws of food; so is the prohibition to eat of this tree found among the laws of food also, Gen. ii. 17. 2. As has likewise been said of the tree of life, that it signified a tree yielding fruit, that would restore and preserve life; so it seems for the like reason most natural to suppose, that the tree of knowledge of good and evil was a tree, whose fruit would let those, who had known good, before they tasted it, know evil; viz. misery, diseases, and death, as a natural consequence of their eating it; and not to suppose it to have a very figurative signification, and to denote a tree, that was a symbol of death. 3. If the tree of life signified a tree yielding a sanative fruit, rendering men immortal; it is as natural to suppose, that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil yielded

a noxious fruit, that would make mankind die ; from their being set both near, and in opposition to one another, Gen. ii. 9. This is yet the stronger from this consideration, that the tree of life would have healed this hurt by a natural operation, as has been shewn before ; so that the mischief brought by the tree of knowledge was a natural effect also. 4. This seems to follow from what God says of this tree, Gen. ii. 17, “ See that thou eat not thereof, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” If a father should say to his child, “ Eat not of such a fruit ; for if you do, you will die ;” every one would understand by it, that the fruit was deadly. And the precise meaning of this threatening we may understand, from the execution of it, to be, that Adam should in that day become (viz. by the slow poison communicated to his blood) liable to die. For the history informs us he did not die on that day, but lived several ages after it. 5. This seems to follow from several allusions to it in Scripture. Of this kind is the expression of “ tasting death ;” and perhaps it is from hence, that the law of Moses said, “ Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree :” by which God designed to perpetuate the memorial of the fact, that death and a curse came by eating of the forbidden tree. I also think it highly probable, that these two trees are alluded to, when life

and death are said to be set before the Israelites, in these words, Deut. xxx. 15, "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil:" and ver. 19, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." 6. It seems more natural to suppose the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to be a deadly, than a symbolical tree; because the former interpretation is better suited to a real history, as the latter interpretation is to a parable, or an allegory. And if it be reasonable, on that account, to suppose the tree of life to be of a preserving and restorative nature; it will be still more reasonable, after that is once allowed, to suppose the tree of knowledge of good and evil to be noxious and deadly. 7. This is the more likely to be the meaning of the tree of knowledge, &c. because this meaning shews, that the prohibition is of a reasonable, and not of an arbitrary nature; namely, a prohibition to eat of a fruit that was fatal. And it is fitter to suppose every command, that God ever gave man, to be of the former kind, than of the latter; whether we consider the perfections of God, or the commands, which, as far as we know, He has even at any time given to mankind. The more carefully we consider them, the more clearly we

shall perceive, that they are all founded in the eternal or temporary reasons of things ; and not in mere will or power. 8. This shews the greatest propriety of God's making this prohibition the trial of Adam's and Eve's obedience, viz. To teach them and their descendants this lesson, which is in effect the sum of all morality, viz. never to yield to appetite and passion, against the plain reason of things. This also shews the great guilt of our first parents in eating the forbidden fruit ; since it was against the most kind and tender prohibition ; barely to indulge a low and mean appetite of the body, to eat of a pleasant fruit ; and a vain and presumptuous ambition of their mind, to become as God ; idly affecting to be in a condition inconsistent with that in which God had placed them, or indeed, in which a created being could be placed. And that is the sense of what our version renders, " Behold, the man is become like one of us !" or rather, as it should be rendered, " Behold the man is become one from us." So the Hebrew and Septuagint may be rendered ; and so the Chaldee paraphrase more fully expresses it ; and to the same purpose is the gloss of Jarchi. The sense is, " Behold, the man has separated himself from us. (It is the speech of the Logos, who personated God as the angel of His presence and council, to some other of the angels his fellows, Heb. i. 9.)

“He has withdrawn himself from our common allegiance, devising contrary means of happiness, to what has been enjoined him : And now, lest after following his own wicked inventions, in taking of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, in order to be happy, in a method contrary to that which has been so reasonably prescribed him, he should also be able to take of the tree of life, and heal the hurt he has received, and thereby be encouraged in having separated himself from us, God’s faithful sons, messengers, and ministers ; let us send him forth from this garden, where the tree of life is only to be found.” “So He drove out the man,” Gen. iii. 22—24.

There can be no manner of doubt but that our first parents understood that the tree of life was of a sanative and restorative nature. But it was not possible for them to hope to be restored and preserved by it against sin as well as against natural decays : they might therefore indeed expect, that it would preserve them if they continued innocent ; but they must conclude, that if they sinned, either they, or the tree, or its virtue, would be removed from each other. Nor can there be much more doubt but they understood, that the tree of knowledge of good and evil was of a noxious and deadly nature, which would disorder and hurt them, and sooner or later bring death upon them.

And could they imagine that would not be the case, if they violated any other precept which God had given them as well as this prohibition? Could they be so stupid as to think, that this additional penalty, or one of equal severity, would not attend the breach of the laws of their nature (over and above such lower penalties as would necessarily result from the breach of those laws), as well as the high penalty that was annexed to the breach of this revealed prohibition? Would they not suppose, that a Being of impartial justice would certainly punish every crime in proportion to its guilt; and that therefore, if they violated any other command that was of the like or of greater clearness and importance, He would punish it with the like or with greater severity? Life therefore could only be understood to attend perfect virtue; and death, or some equal punishment, must have been understood to follow every equal instance of disobedience and vice. So that this promise and threatening, which was a part of the law of food, must not barely be considered as a sanction of that particular law, but as a revealed and additional sanction to the whole law of nature, and designed as a farther and more powerful enforcement of obedience to it.

SECTION VI.—*The consequences of the fall to our first parents, and to their offspring.*

But notwithstanding that Adam was thus a son of God by creation, derived from Him so as to have no other father, resembling Him in his moral perfections, and having an earthly dominion, in an animal body covered with a glory, together with a terrestrial bliss and immortality, as his inheritance (the last of which was made known to him by revelation, on condition of his obedience, with a threatening of death on disobedience); yet by criminally indulging his appetites in compliance with the temptation of the devil, in eating the forbidden and noxious fruit, instead of continuing the son of God, or in other words, instead of continuing to be like God, and to obey Him, and so to have any right to this earthly inheritance himself, or to transmit it to his posterity, he forfeited it, became a child of the devil, whom he imitated and obeyed, and brought a curse (the portion of the children of the devil) upon himself and all his descendants; namely, inquietude, toil, care, and vexation, by the curse on the ground, and at last death.¹

As a child of God is one who, imitating God, and obeying Him, has a title to an inheritance

¹ Gen. iii. 17. 20.

from God, through the divine goodness and bounty, worthy of the relation he stands in to God, by his imitation of Him ; so, a child of the devil, on the other hand, is one, who chooses to imitate and obey him, 1 John iii. 8. 10. 12, and who, by God's righteous vengeance, will receive a like portion of God's wrath and curse with him, Matth. xxv. 41. This will appear by the places, where this expression is used. See John viii. 44, and Acts xiii. 10, where child of the devil is explained by Barjesus's imitating the devil, in the next words, "Thou enemy of all righteousness." 1 John iii. 8. 10. 12, "He that committeth sin is of the devil" (is of his family, is his child, by imitating and obeying him). "In this the children of God are manifested, and the children of the devil : whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother" (but is of the devil). "Not as Cain, who was of the wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." Though these expressions of child of God, and of the devil, are all of them the expressions of Jesus, Paul, or John; yet they shew, that these expressions were familiar to the Jews, and taken from Cain and Abel; the last of which was a child of God, imitating Him in works of righteousness; and the former

a child of the devil, imitating him in falsehood and maliciousness.

Adam being no longer in the image or likeness of God, begat not men in that image or likeness (or sons of God, and heirs of life, dominion, and glory), but in his own likeness, after his image," Gen. v. 3, i. e. a dishonourable, miserable, dying man, as he himself now was. Adam, before his fall, was a son of God, created in "God's image, and after His likeness," Gen. i. 26, i. e. among other things, he was covered with a glory, like that Being who represented God, and possessed of dominion, bliss, and immortality. And if Adam had begot sons in innocence, he would have begot them sons of God, in God's image, and after His likeness: but having lost that image and likeness of God, he could now beget them only "after his own likeness, and in his own image," Gen. v. 3. And that being set here in opposition to the likeness and image of God, in which God is said to have created Adam, Gen. i. 26, must signify the reverse of that, in which God's likeness and image did consist. We might have seen, that Adam's likeness and image in Gen. v. 3, was mentioned in opposition to God's likeness and image in Gen. i. 26, though Moses had not made a repetition, chap. v. 3, of what he had said, chap. i. 26. But that the opposition he intended might not escape us, he takes care

to repeat it here, viz. chap. v. 3, saying, "This is the book of the generations of Adam. (Here should be a full stop.) In the day that God created Adam, in the likeness of God made He him.—And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his own image." This repetition, ch. v. 1, of what he had said, ch. i. 26, in so concise and accurate an historian as Moses, and the precise opposition of Adam's likeness and image to the likeness and image of God, fully shews, that the likeness and image of Adam, in which he begat Seth, is the reverse of the likeness and image of God, in which God created Adam. There can otherwise be no account given of this repetition of Moses, as it stands here connected with Adam's generations by Seth.

The children of Adam were now born "sons of men," Gen. vi. 1. That is, mere sons of men : such sons of men as were not at the same time become the sons of God by adoption : or, in other words, men begotten of dishonourable, miserable, mortal men, and imitators of them, and of their father the devil, and heirs of the curse and of death ; and who, not becoming imitators of God themselves, had no claim or hope of a future inheritance from Him. Men began in the days of Seth ("the seed whom God had given our first parents, instead of

righteous Abel, whom Cain slew," Gen. iv. 25), to "call themselves by the name of the Lord," ch. iv. ult. according to the marginal rendering, i. e. to call themselves the sons of God (as we see more fully, ch. vi. 2): Seth being the seed, in which the adoption was to run. Cain, on the contrary, became an imitator of the devil, or the seed of the serpent, by murdering his brother, and lying to God about him, Gen. iv. 12—14; and had received a peculiar curse, and a sentence of banishment, Gen. iv. 8, 9. 12, from God's family and presence, on that account, Gen. iv. 12—14. And as his descendants followed his bad example, they are from thence called the sons or daughters of men, Gen. vi. 2; i. e. of mere men, who were heirs of death; being altogether unworthy of God's adopting them to the re-enjoyment of life in Eden, the only inheritance that was expected by the sons of God in this period of Moses's history. Perhaps they are called the sons of men, rather than sons of the devil, or the seed of the serpent; because, though they imitated the serpent, it was not understood that they should have any other punishment, than the curse on the ground, together with a peculiar share of other judgments, and at last death, from which they should not recover; though the sons of God should. But that after a resurrection, they should have their portion with the devil, "in the lake of fire and

brimstone, which is the second death," Rev. xx. 10. 14, was not known till the times of the New Testament. For though the resurrection of good men to everlasting life is mentioned or hinted at in several places of the Old Testament, yet I do not find that the resurrection of the wicked to the second death ever is, till Daniel, ch. xii. 2. And there only under the notion of everlasting shame and contempt : which does not convey any notion to us of their having their portion with the devil, or what that punishment of everlasting shame and contempt, in particular, should be.

The children of Adam were now born also, heirs of the curse. As Adam and Eve were driven out of paradise, were stripped of their glory, and of the bliss and dominion it was the badge of, and became immediately subject to strong appetites and passions, to inquietude, toil, care, vexation, and particularly to diseases and death, by being debarred from the tree of life ; so all their children were born out of paradise, without any of the glorious and blissful circumstances that their parents were at first invested with, and subject to all the unhappy circumstances which they either felt in themselves or from things about them.

SECTION VII.—*The nature of the temptation of our first parents.*

As God had given the hopes of an immortal life and happiness to our first parents on their obedience, and threatened them with death on their disobedience, in order to give them additional motives to persevere in their duty ; the devil, that wicked and subtle spirit, tried to turn the promise and threatening to a quite contrary purpose ; and tempted them, by representing to them, that that state of happiness, though great and desirable, and promised to be continued, yet was not promised but on condition of obedience, and was therefore but precarious : that it depended not only on their obedience, but on the perpetual use of the tree of life ; and that death was threatened on disobedience, by which all would be irrecoverably lost : that what was wanting, therefore, to make them completely happy, was to know how they might indefeasibly possess the good they enjoyed, and how they might certainly avoid the evil with which they were threatened : that eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil would furnish them with that knowledge ; and that it being designed by God to be that to their minds which the tree of life was to their bodies, they would, upon tasting it, “ become like God,” knowing the

means by which they might so assure themselves of the good they possessed, as to be out of all reach of the evil with which they were threatened ; the way in which God Himself that made them, and who had placed them in these blissful and glorious circumstances, possesses the one, and is secured against the other. When they first hearkened to this proposal, they fell ; for here lust was fully conceived and indulged : they no longer submitted and resigned themselves to God's disposal, but presumptuously affected a state infinitely superior to that in which He had placed them, and inconsistent with it, and indeed with the very notion of a created being. The state in which God had placed them was a state of trial : and a dependant state must be the state of every being who derives existence from another. And having once fully indulged their vain and high ambition, they easily fell into a compliance with the means proposed ; the only means that offered for gratifying it ; and could then even suffer themselves to be so far deluded (for reason and passion rise and fall in proportion to each other) as to eat of the fruit, on being told, that God had not forbidden them that tree ; though they knew most assuredly, that God had not expressly forbidden them any thing else : and moreover, seeing it to be " a tree good for food, and pleasant to the eye," as well as " a tree to be

desired to make one wise ; the woman took of the fruit, and did eat, and gave to her husband, and he did eat :”¹ which, being the overt-act of disobedience, is said to be the first transgression ; though it was but the consequence of that lust, fully conceived and indulged, which properly and strictly was so.

SECTION VIII.—*The nature and character of the Tempter who deceived our first parents.*

It is now necessary to enquire who, or what was the tempter, which deceived our first parents. Whatever it was, the account of Moses makes it evident that the tempter must have appeared at least in the shape and figure of a serpent, from the name the historian gives him ; from his saying, “ that the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field,” Gen. iii. 1, and from accounting for the temptation, in some sort, from the great subtlety of that animal ; and lastly, from the sentence which is pronounced on him : “ on thy breast shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat,” ver. 15. Now we read of “ flying fiery serpents,” Isaiah xiv. 29. xxx. 6. The fiery serpents, mentioned Numb. xxi. 6. 8, are in the Hebrew called seraphim. I suppose they were winged too. For so were the seraphim (i. e. angels, who were as a flame of fire,

¹ See the Dissertation, No. I.

Psal. civ. 4), Isaiah vi. 2. 6. And it is probable, that the serpent mentioned here was of the same kind; at least, it is certain, it was of an erect figure, from part of the sentence, "on thy belly (or breast) shalt thou go, and dust (or what is dusty, by being on the ground) shalt thou eat." That also implies, that the serpent could, by means of its erect figure, pluck fruit before. It is highly probable too, that his scales were beautiful and glistening; from whence they were called fiery, as shining and of a flame colour: though the historian does not call the serpent a seraph here, but *nachash*, from his subtlety, which was most pertinent to the account that he was going to give us. It is farther to be observed, that the larger sort of these serpents (*nachash*) are what the LXX render dragons, Job xxvi. 13, Amos ix. 3. And it is farther more probable, that this serpent or dragon was of this fiery, shining and beautiful appearance, from what St. Paul says to the Corinthians, that Satan himself "is transformed into an angel of light," viz. by that glistening appearance of a winged serpent resembling a seraph. I believe it will puzzle any one to tell us, what St. Paul refers to in this place, if it be not to the temptation of our first parents, 2 Cor. xi. 14. What makes it plain, that he does, is what he says, ver. 3, that he fears "lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve, through his subtlety;" so, &c.

Such was the appearance of the serpent that tempted Eve. And Moses, as becomes an historian, in this as well as in other instances, speaks according to the appearance of things; and therefore calls it the serpent. So will every good historian write. If Sir Isaac Newton had written a relation of a battle fought soon after it was light, he would have said, "that the battle was fought about sun-rising," that being the appearance, and from thence the language of our country, as well as of all others; though every one knows, it was not his opinion, that the sun rose or set. But the tempter must have been more than a serpent, though the historian gives him no other name. For he speaks, he reasons, he designs, he is sentenced, in a way that shews it was not a mere serpent: if it had, sure, as it is said, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed;" it would have been added, "they shall break the head of thy seed, and thy seed shall bruise their heel." But instead of those words, we find these: "It shall bruise *thy head*, and *thou* shalt bruise *his* heel." It shall bruise *thy head*, this very serpent's head, who had beguiled *Eve*: that is (since it is pointed singly at him, and not at his seed, as it must be understood figuratively), it shall destroy thy policy and stratagem, by which thou hast brought misery and death on this first pair, and

on all their descendants. It must therefore be some other being than a mere serpent, who appeared thus as a serpent. This would be the more easily understood by those to whom Moses wrote : because the visible residence of God was called God, and Jehovah God, in this period ; and even in the very time when Moses wrote this his history, though they knew, that as God was invisible, and filled all places (as Solomon says in his prayer to God, 1 Kings viii. 27), He could not appear to them, and reside at the entrance of Eden, in the ark, in the tabernacle, or in the temple ; but that it was the great Jehovah angel, who personated and represented Him. It is in the same manner of speaking, that Moses calls Jehovah and two angels three men, because they appeared in the shape of men, Gen. xviii. 1, 2.

Bishop Sherlock, in his “ More sure Word of Prophecy,” thinks that Moses calls the tempter the serpent, and not the devil, to avoid all danger of the Israelites’ thinking there were two independent principles : the one of good, and the other of evil. Such a conjecture would have been more probable, if it could be supposed that the Israelites could have thought all this temptation could have been managed and conducted by a literal serpent. It is more reasonable therefore to think, that Moses called him a serpent, from his appearing as a serpent ; and that

that was the name, by which he was as well known then, as he has been since; viz. in the times of the Apostles, and ever after. See 2 Cor. xi. 3. Rev. xx. 2.

Who this being was that appeared as a serpent, and that actuated it, Moses does not give us any other express account, than by the name he gives him. Perhaps it was altogether unnecessary to do it to the Israelites, to whom he wrote it, for the reason just now mentioned. It is certain, that it would not have agreed well with his history, to have named him the Devil, or Satan; Moses not having said any thing particularly either of the creation of the angels, or of the revolt of a part of them. But if one of them was this tempter, who was so likely, as the head and chief of that revolt, who, from his opposition to God's moral government, and the envy and malice he would bear this happy couple, and such as might descend from them, would endeavour to cause them to be wicked and miserable, like himself and his accomplices? And so the Hebrew doctors write, that the unclean spirit, Samael (the devil), was united with the serpent. Rab. Menach. on Gen. iii. That Satan was a tempter of mankind, was an opinion as early as the book of Job, Job i. 6—13. But by after-revelation, we find these farther particulars concerning them. That God created the angels: and whereas He made man

dust, He made them winds, and a flame of fire, Psalm civ. 4, excellent in wisdom, and mighty in power, Psalm ciii. 20. That some of them, Matth. xxv. 41, having an head or chief, Matth. xii. 24. 27, "by not abiding in the truth, nor keeping their first estate, left their own habitation, and were cast down to hell, reserved for chains of darkness at the judgment of the great day," 2 Pet. ii. 4. And that this chief, who is called "the dragon, that old serpent, is the Devil and Satan," Rev. xx. 2. And that "as he sinned from the beginning," 1 John iii. 8, was "a liar (a deceiver), and a murderer," John viii. 44, and particularly, that as "he deceived Eve through his subtlety," 2 Cor. xi. 3, so that "he has since deceived all the world," Rev. xii. 9, and will go on to deceive them, till that, near the end of all things, "he shall be cast into the bottomless pit, and be shut up there," that he may not deceive the nations any more, till the thousand years be fulfilled, when he must be loosed a little season: but that at the end of that season, this deceiver "shall be cast into the lake of fire, and be tormented day and night for ever and ever," Rev. xx. 10. In fine, what is meant by the serpent, is the Devil and Satan, appearing to the woman, as a beautiful winged glistening serpent, which was then of an erect figure, and resembled a seraph, or an angel of light: yet not resembling an an-

gel of light so nearly, but that the woman would have easily perceived the difference, had she not been willing to think him an angel of light, from his temptation's falling in with the criminal appetite and passion she had indulged: though, as St. Paul says to the Galatians, alluding to this story (of the devil's transforming himself into an angel of light, to beguile Eve), if an angel from heaven had told her, that she might eat of a tree, which God had so expressly and strictly forbid her to eat of; she should have said, as St. Paul does on that occasion, "Let him be accursed!" Gal. i. 8.

No doubt can be made, but that this vigilant and malicious spirit, who constantly lies in wait to deceive, and who renewed his temptations to the second Adam after the strongest repulses, would soon have repeated them to the first Adam after this easy victory. And nothing less was to be expected, than that, after he had seduced him and his wife to an act of most presumptuous disobedience, in order to gratify a low appetite of their body, and a high, though vain ambition of their mind, he would soon have fallen in with the suspicions and distrust of their guilty thoughts, and have tempted them to despair of ever obtaining mercy from their offended Maker; thereby effectually to prevent all attempts to return to their duty.

SECTION IX.—*The various remedies of the evils brought upon mankind by the fall of Adam.*

In this deplorable condition, God was pleased to give them some hopes of His mercy, in order to prevent the farther attempts of the devil, and the fatal consequences of their despair ; the common, though not the reasonable or necessary, attendant of guilt. God was pleased to give them these hopes several ways.

1. By sentencing the serpent, who was the author of all this sin and misery, before He sentenced them.

The sentence pronounced on him is suitable to this outward appearance ; but the sentence is so expressed, that it cannot be supposed to relate to a mere serpent, but to the Devil and Satan, who assumed and actuated that figure. And Jehovah God said unto the serpent, “ Because thou hast thus wickedly and arrogantly tempted and deceived the woman by the figure of a serpent, cursed shalt thou be above all cattle and beasts of the field. Cursed shall this very figure be, which thou hast taken, and all animals of the same kind and appearance. For instead of this erect figure and bright appearance, thou, as long as thou actuatest this body, and they in all times coming, shall be

reduced from the figure or reality of a beast of the field, to be a mean reptile. On thy belly (or breast) shalt thou go, whilst thou keepest this body ; and they in all times to come. And whereas before, thou and they could, by this erect figure, pluck fruit, as thou didst the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, in order thereby to deceive the woman ; thou, as long as thou actuatest this body, and they in all future times, shalt only be able to eat what is on the ground, and mingled with it. The reducing this creature from a beast of the field, to so mean a reptile, shall be a standing memorial of the wicked deception, a standing caution and warning to the human race against thee ; and thou shalt be thereby deprived of so successful an instrument to convey thy deceptions by for the future (as a serpent is, in its present figure and appearance), by the likeness it bears to a seraph or an angel of light." Thus God, in cursing the serpent, cursed all serpents, in the same manner as in cursing Adam he cursed all mankind. " Moreover, I will put enmity between thee and the woman, who seeing, and daily finding more and more, into what misery thou hast brought her, shall hate thee, and be more watchful against thy wiles and temptations for the future. I will also put enmity between thy seed, i. e. the viperous race of Cain (see Matth. iii. 7), who will be of thy family, a

liar and amurderer like thee (see John viii. 44), and between *Seth* and his seed, and imitators. For I will give the woman another seed, viz. *Seth*, in the stead of righteous *Abel*, whom *Cain*, that will be of thee, will slay : and one of the woman's seed by *Seth* shall at last destroy death, thy plot, and policy, and thee, who hast, by my permission, had the power of bringing it on this first pair and all their race ; though whilst he is doing it, I will also suffer thee to bruise his heel, afflict him, and bring him to death, by the accursed tree, as thou hast brought death into the world by means of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. But his design and aim thou shalt never defeat. It shall even be executed through thy afflicting him. For by his death, he shall destroy both death and thee, who hast brought it upon the world." See the Dissertation, No. I., where all this matter is more fully represented.

2. By letting them see, that though, by their being sentenced immediately after the serpent, they were to die, yet that they should be continued for some time as the parents of a future race.

3. By giving them the promise, that some one or more of the woman's seed should bruise this very serpent's head ("thy head"¹), who

¹ Gen. iii. 15.

had beguiled them ; that is, should destroy the policy and stratagem of this very serpent, who had by his subtlety brought misery and death upon them and such as should descend from them.

4. By the presence of God still continuing with them, though probably at the entrance of Eden, in order to bar the way to it and to the tree of life, while men continued in this mortal state.¹

Cain speaks of “ the face of God,” Gen. iv. 14, from whence he was banished ; and Moses calls Cain’s going towards the land of Nod (that is, the land of banishment) Cain’s “ going out from the presence of Jehovah,” ver. 16. If we trace these and the like expressions, relating to God’s residence or appearance among men, through the Old and New Testaments, we shall have abundant reason to think, that a great Being, who personated and represented the Most High God, constantly resided in the world till the flood, dwelt in the ark during the flood, and retired from the world soon after the flood ; that He came down from heaven at the confusion of Babel ; that He appeared sometimes to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to Moses at the bush ; that He came and dwelt among the Israelites in the tabernacle, and afterwards in

¹ Gen. iii. 24.

the temple till its destruction. I refer the reader to a Dissertation at the end of this Essay. No. II. However, though I apprehend this Being was the Logos, yet I apprehend He was not then known under that character, but under the character of “the great Angel of God’s presence and council.” See a Dissertation at the end of the second part of this Essay.

This great Being must have had a fixed residence somewhere, or offerings could not have been brought to Him. For how could any man have known where to have presented them; or have known whether He accepted them or no; that is, whether a fire proceeding from this great Being devoured them or no? See the Dissertation, No. II. Farther, it is probable that this Being resided at the entrance of Eden. There, Moses says, God placed cherubims, and a glory, called “a flaming sword,” or the flame of, or like a sword, Gen. iii. 24. The cherubims seem to have been an host of angels attending this great Being or Glory; as they did on other occasions. See Psal. lxxviii. 17, 18, compared with Eph. iv. 8—11. Who was so likely to guard the entrance to Eden as Jehovah God (that is, the Being representing Jehovah God), “who drove out the man?” Gen. iii. ult. And if He had a fixed residence in the world till the flood, as I flatter myself I have proved in the

Dissertation, No. II., where was it so likely to be as at the entrance of paradise, in order to shew men, that the only way ever to re-enter that blissful garden, was to walk with God? See the Dissertation, No. II. Temples and altars were not yet erected. Such buildings were the product of after-ages, when men multiplied, and arts and sciences were increased.

And though this great Being resided at the entrance of paradise, “to bar the way to it, and to the tree of life, against all men in this mortal state;” yet our first parents and their antediluvian descendants had great reason to conceive good hopes of re-entering it after death, from His residing there, though it was for the purpose just now mentioned; since His presence still continued among them, and accepted their gifts: and if they walked with God as obedient children, and if they, who had the great privilege to converse thus with their heavenly Father, imitated Him in purity, justice, and mercy, they would hope, with great reason, that they might be admitted to paradise after death: for otherwise they would have concluded, that paradise and the tree of life would have been destroyed rather than preserved, though guarded indeed against men in this mortal state. Nor could these hopes fail of being greatly confirmed by their seeing Enoch taken thither by Jehovah God; who had distinguished

himself by “walking with Him.” See below.

5. By preserving Eden and the tree of life. For if an entrance to them was to have been barred for ever, they would have concluded, that Eden and the tree of life would have been destroyed rather than continued, though thus barred against them.

6. By appointing sacrifices; if God was pleased to appoint them, about this time, as many learned men think, and with great probability.

It is conjectured, that the “coats of skins,” which God made for Adam and Eve (Gen. iii. 21), were the skins of beasts that they had offered in sacrifice to Him by His appointment: an appointment designed to shew Adam what that death was which he was to undergo, as the sanction of the broken law; the great mercy of God in reprieving him from it; and the way to obtain His present and future favour; namely, by an humble confession of his sin, a promise of future amendment, and persevering in a course of life suitable to such an application to the Divine mercy and goodness: all which was to be expressed in the dumb shew of sacrifice, suited to the manner of instruction and devotion in that period of the world. See the Dissertation, No. I. And it is the more probable that these skins were the skins of beasts slain in sacrifice, because men were not yet permitted

to slay them for food ; or, as far as we know, for any other purpose but that of sacrifice : and that they were ordered to slay some beasts for that purpose, will, I think, appear highly probable from what follows.

For it is certain, that righteous “ Abel brought the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof,” Gen. iv. 4. “ Brought them,” i. e. brought them to the Being who visibly resided, as representing and personating God, and, as I apprehend, at the entrance of Eden. This is the constant and invariable sense of “ bringing an offering” throughout all the books of Moses. Bringing an offering was, under the law, bringing it to the tabernacle and temple, where God resided ; and, if it was a beast that was offered, it was brought and slain there. See the Dissertation, No. II.

Now it is not likely that Abel, a righteous man, would have slain a lamb without a divine appointment.

1. Because men have a natural abhorrence to the killing of any creature, and particularly to the slaying such a creature as a lamb, which must have an apparatus to the doing of it ; as tying it, slaying it, seeing its dying struggles, &c. during which time the blood will shudder, till custom has reconciled men to such a practice, and has overcome their natural abhorrence of it. But as no such custom can be supposed to have

prevailed in the world at that time, and as the slaying a lamb was then of no use to mankind (since no part of it was to be eaten for food), it is not reasonable to suppose a good man would have slain a lamb without an order from Him, “whose are the beasts of the field, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.”

2. Because it is contrary to reason, as well as to natural instinct, to slay a beast, and deprive it of life, and all its agreeable sensations, without a manifest cause; especially so innocent and useful a creature as a lamb. We see mankind did not kill beasts for food, till God gave them to man for that purpose, Gen. ix. 3. Much less would they have slain them to offer them to God without His express appointment.

3. Because God accepted the sacrifice of Abel, which seems to have been made as an humble acknowledgment of guilt, and application for mercy, on a promise of amendment, not indeed expressed by words, but by the dumb shew of a sacrifice, according to God’s appointment; whereas God rejected the eucharistical offering of Cain, being the fruits of the ground, brought “at the end of days” (or of harvest), as those words might be understood; who seems, like a perfectly righteous man, to have made a thank-offering (not unlike the Pharisee in the parable, “God, I thank thee,” &c.), without any such acknowledgment of guilt, or

application for pardon and favour on future amendment, by such an expiatory offering, as God had appointed, and as Abel had accordingly brought. The history gives no other express reason for God's having respect unto Abel's offering, and no respect unto Cain's, but that Abel offered "of the flock," and Cain "of the fruits of the ground." Not that it can be possibly supposed, that God liked one gift, for its own sake, rather than another: but what is implied in the reason given by the historian for God's accepting one offering and rejecting the other, is the different disposition of the minds of the offerers; namely, either that Abel brought such a sacrifice as expressed a sense of his being justly liable to death, and that he only hoped for favour on his humility, piety, justice, and mercy; or that he brought such an offering as God had appointed, in a sense of the obedience he owed to all God's commands, or both, which is most probable; while Cain brought such an one as shewed no sense of guilt, or resolution of amendment, like one perfectly righteous, who would however thank God for His benefits; or else as preferring his own ritual to God's appointment, from a want of an humble obedience that was due to all His commands; or both the one and the other, which is most likely to have been the case. This seems to have been the meaning of the

words which follow, ver. 6, when, upon Cain's being angry that his offering was rejected, the Divine Presence (that is, the Being representing it) says, "Why art thou wroth? If thou dost well (that is, perfectly well, as thou affectest to be thought to do, by bringing no expiatory sacrifice, as I have appointed men liable to death to do, but only an eucharistical one), shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou dost not well, sin (yet) lieth at the door." For thou hast not made any confession of thy guilt, or application for pardon on amendment, by the dumb shew that I have appointed. Though, if thou hadst done one or the other, and acted suitably to thy professions, "thou shouldst have the excellency (belonging to an elder brother); and he (Abel) should be subject unto thee" (as the marginal reading is) as the younger brother. The version of the LXX is much more favourable to this interpretation than our English version. The LXX render the text thus: "if thou offerest well;" instead of "if thou dost well; and if thou hast not divided (namely, the sacrifice) well." So Father Simon understands the LXX. And he farther says, that the last clause in the Hebrew may be thus translated literally, "and if thou hast not done well *in breaking*;" which would lead one to think, that the fault that Cain was reprov'd for was, that he offered corn broken or bruised,

instead of offerign a lamb. Father Simon's Crit. Hist. book ii. ch. 5. The version in Coverdale's Bible seems to be the best interpretation of this passage; and is, I think, justly rendered from the Hebrew.

4. Because God accepted Abel's sacrifice, while He rejected Cain's, and smelt a sweet savour of rest from Noah's burnt-offering; whereas God always disapproves "will-worship," Matth. xv. 9. Col. ii. 22, 23, and especially a worship that must have been not barely their own contrivance, but, as things then stood, contrary to reason and to natural instinct at the same time. For so it must needs have been, till God, the Lord and Proprietor of all things, had given them an order to slay a beast as a sacrifice, and thereby perform a worship that, upon His leave to slay a beast, would become the most proper to their circumstances, in the dumb shew, that has been mentioned.

5. Because Abel is said to have offered a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, "by faith," Heb. xi. 4. And by faith is meant his fidelity or obedience to God, and his expectation of acceptance upon his obedience. That at least is what is meant by faith in the instances of the other worthies which immediately follow in that chapter, namely, Noah, who prepared the ark in obedience to God's command, and the hope of His protection; Abraham, who left his

country at God's call in expectation of an heavenly one, &c.¹

For on that supposition one can scarce help farther supposing, that God told them, that if they would sacrifice an animal, in humble acknowledgment of their having forfeited life, and being at that moment justly liable to death, without recovery; the penalty denounced on breaking the law; and which they would now have reason to dread the more, from seeing the dying agonies of the animal that was slain in sacrifice; and if they would for the future act suitably to such an acknowledgment, by yielding sincere, though imperfect, obedience to the law they were under, He would accept their offering, and receive them to His favour; and give them a visible sign of it, by devouring their sacrifice with a fire proceeding from Himself, whilst they should stand by unhurt, and behold a glory mildly and benignly shining on them: whereas the fire proceeding from Him sometimes devoured the wicked; as Lev. x. 2. Numb. xi. 1—4. xii. 42. 45, 46. xxxv. 16. 41—47. And finally, God gave them farther hopes of His mercy, by making it a part of the

¹ This same view of the origin and meaning of sacrifice has been taken by Sherlock, Kennicot, Archbishop Magee, the learned Mr. Faber, and others. It has been objected to, by Mr. Davison and Mr. Benson, whose arguments do not appear to me to be satisfactory. See Molesworth's reply to Mr. Davison.

sentence, that God would “put enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman.”

SECTION X.—*The crime, and punishment, of Cain.*

But notwithstanding this gracious intimation, which was not only a promise to destroy the policy of the serpent, but implied a command to be more watchful against his arts and wiles, more vigorous in resisting all his temptations, and to be at constant war and enmity with all that should afterwards become his seed (that is, should imitate and obey him); I say, notwithstanding this gracious intimation, yet Cain, the first-born of human race, instead of resisting him, presently became a liar and a murderer, as that wicked spirit, his father, had then begun to be; and that, notwithstanding God's gracious admonition and caution to the contrary:¹ whereby Cain plainly rejected the hopes which this first promise made to mankind should have kept alive in his mind, and which ought to have animated his whole conduct. He had therefore a peculiar curse inflicted on him, Gen. iv. 12. The ground that Cain tilled was put under a peculiar curse of barrenness. His posterity partook in that curse: this is intimated

¹ Gen. v. 6, 7.

in the following verses, by telling us, that Cain and his posterity quitted the manner of living like husbandmen and tillers of the ground, and betook themselves to be grasiers, musicians, and artificers, Gen. iv. 17—23. Sanchoniatho says, that they betook themselves to fishing and navigation, from the great barrenness of the ground, and the unfriendliness of the seasons.

In addition to the curse thus inflicted on him, he was at the same time driven out from the face or presence of God ;¹ that is, from the place where God resided ; where the Being resided which personated and represented Jehovah the Father, as a Glory covered with a cloud, in an human shape, which was at the entrance of paradise ;² Cain having, by the contempt he expressed of the first promise, and other kind intimations of mercy, and of God's gracious admonition to him, and by the wicked temper he persisted in, rendered himself utterly unworthy of any of His farther gracious communications. On his banishment from the presence and family of God, Cain became the head of the family which the devil set up in the world.

The family of God is the number of the children of God jointly avowing their dependance on His fatherly care and goodness, in

¹ Gen. iv. 12. 14. 16.

² See the Dissertation, No. II.

a course of steady imitation and obedience; and expressing their expectations of a suitable portion and blessing (in all probability paradise after death) from His fatherly goodness and bounty. Those are the children of God who, being born heirs of the curse, are renewed in the image of God, and adopted to the inheritance of the promised immortality.

The family of the Devil bears some analogy to the family of God, but not a perfect one. By the family of the Devil here are meant all those who chose openly and avowedly to imitate, obey, and worship the Devil, the great enemy, rather than God, the great Father of mankind; rejecting the adoption to His blessing, and a future inheritance in paradise, for such protection and favour as they hoped to receive from the Devil in this life. This family seems to have been confined to Cain's descendants, till they mingled themselves with the descendants of Seth.

This family came also under one part of the curse of the serpent; namely, that God would "put enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent."

SECTION XI.—*The obedience, and reward of Seth, and of the other faithful, of the patriarchal age ; with the nature of their hope of immortality.*

God gave the woman “another seed,” even Seth, instead of righteous Abel, whom Cain slew.¹

Seth was the name Eve gave her son ; because, as she adds, “Jehovah hath appointed me another seed, instead of righteous Abel, whom Cain slew,” Gen. iv. 25. This makes me think, that Seth, as well as Christ, is meant by “the seed of the woman,” Gen. iii. 15, when God says, that He will put enmity between her seed and the serpent’s ;” that is, between Seth and his pious descendants, the sons of God, Gen. iv. 26, vi. 2, and the Devil and his seed (imitators) ; namely, Cain and his descendants ; and that her seed, or one of her seed and descendants by Seth, “shall break thy head,” or defeat thy wicked stratagem, “and thou shalt bruise his heel,” or vex and afflict him.

The family of this patriarch continued to be the “family of God,” and was understood and taken to be such, when his descendants became numerous ; being “called by the name of the Lord,” as the marginal reading is, Gen. iv. 26, or “the sons (or children) of God,” Gen. vi. 1,

¹ Gen. iv. 25.

not only as they paid that obedience to the law of their nature, and to such other laws as were immediately revealed to them, as was due to the laws of a Being supremely powerful, wise, and good, who created and preserved them, and was kind, tender, and indulgent towards them; and as they imitated Him in purity, justice, and mercy; but as they might have formed inferences and hopes, that since they obeyed Him, and became like unto Him, though they were not born to the inheritance of a son of God, &c. (a right which Adam had forfeited for them as well as for himself), yet God would not fail to adopt them to some suitable inheritance after death, which they saw must be every man's lot; though without knowing so fully, what that reward or inheritance should be.

It is highly probable, that the reward or inheritance that Adam, and good men among his descendants, after the fall, expected, on repentance and sincere obedience, was to be re-admitted to the happy mansion, from whence Adam, the son of God, had been driven for his disobedience; and out of which all his posterity were begotten, and from which they were all kept by the cherubims and the glory, as a flame like a sword. To any thing beyond this it is not at all likely, that any of their thoughts should lead them. Who, particularly, could tell, that the brightest displays of the glory of all God's per-

fections were to be seen in the third heavens, till Christ acquainted us with it? Who could have thought of soaring to so immeasurable an height, till Christ assured us that He would come and take us to Himself; that so where He is there we might be also? Or where do we meet with any expectation that good men expressed of going to heaven, before Christ came down from thence to shew us the way thither? But though, for these reasons, it is not likely that the first men would carry their hopes to any thing beyond paradise; yet it is not likely they would expect any thing less from the goodness and bounty of their heavenly Father, on their sincerely returning to pay obedience to His will; especially since His Presence, which had conversed with our first parents in the garden, still continued among them, received their devotions, mildly shone upon them, accepted their gifts, gave them gracious manifestations of His will; and, instead of destroying paradise and the tree of life, only guarded the entrance to them from men in general in this mortal state; but took Enoch, who walked with God, and led him to them. What prayers were good men so likely to offer to God, at the place where He resided, as that, since they were debarred paradise in this life, for having lost the relation of created or begotten sons of God, they might be admitted to it by adoption after death? When,

as the Hebrew doctors say, "Adam shall not be driven out from it." See Beresith Ketana on Gen. iii. ult. "Adam was driven out of paradise in this world, but in the world to come he shall not be driven out." To the same purpose R. Menachem, on Gen. iii. says, "There are also that say of the tree of life, that it was not created in vain; but the men of the resurrection shall eat of it, and live for ever." And the Chaldee Paraphrast on Cant. i. 4, "The King hath brought me into His chambers," says, "Our doctors of blessed memory have said, These are the chambers of the gardens of Eden." And on Cant. iv. 12, "As the garden of Eden, into which no man hath power to enter, but the just." The ancient Jews had an expectation of the recovery of Eden by the Messiah. For they write of seven things which He shall shew them; two of which are "the garden of Eden, and the tree of life." Rabbi Elias Ben-Moses, in Sefhirreskith Choamah, fol. 4. 12. In which they were not mistaken; as I hope to shew more fully hereafter. The traditionary hope of re-entering paradise was preserved among the Heathen: for it is one of the Chaldean oracles, "Seek paradise, the glorious country of the soul!" And indeed the first happy state of man, the miserable state succeeding it, and the restitution of the first happy state, are the three great lines that run through all the mythology of

the Heathen, both ancient and modern : as has been shewn with great learning, judgment, and elegance, by the Chevalier Ramsay in his *Travels of Cyrus*.

As God was the God and Father of Adam in innocence by creation, it was also expected, that He would by adoption become the God and Father of every one after the fall who should imitate and obey Him. Whence it came to pass, that God and Father, or terms that imply them, as sons or children of God, are promiscuously used even in this part of sacred history, while the notions of Divine adoption were but faint and languid. These terms of God or Father, or terms that imply them, as sons or children of God, are sometimes set in opposition to the “seed of the serpent,” and at other times to the “children of men,” who are heirs of death.

Cain is not reckoned as the seed of Adam and Eve. Abel was reckoned as their seed ; and after him Seth. For Seth is “set or appointed ;” and so Eve explains it. “For God,” saith she, “hath appointed me another seed, instead of Abel whom Cain slew,” Gen. iv. 25. Seth therefore is the seed of the woman, as Isaac afterwards was of Abraham, Gen. xxi. 12. And accordingly in the book of the generations of Adam, Seth only is named, Gen. v. 1—5. And as Seth was the seed of the woman, Cain was the seed of the serpent, imitating and

obeying him (see 1 John iii. 12. Matth. iii. 7. Luke iii. 7); banished from God's family and presence, and under His particular curse, Gen. iv. 11—15. A curse which peculiarly followed him and his posterity; and who were at last all destroyed by the flood.

We learn from many passages that the sons of God are sometimes mentioned in opposition "to the children of men," Gen. vi. 2. "And it came to pass—that the sons of God saw the daughters of men." The sons of God are those of Seth's family, who called themselves by "the name of Jehovah," Gen. iv. ult. See also Gen. xi. 5, where Moses says to the children of Israel, Deut. xiv. 1, "Ye are the sons of Jehovah your God." See 1 John iii. 1. 10. "The daughters of men" are those who are the daughters of mere men, born out of God's family; namely, the daughters of Cain, descended from a man banished from God's family and presence, Gen. iv. 14, and consequently excluded from all hopes of a divine inheritance. See also Gen. xi. 5.

SECTION XII.—*The more peculiar reward of Enoch.*

To give the antediluvians a more assured and lively notion of their adoption, God saw fit, after that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, had

directed the course of his life, according to God's will, "to take him" from among men, in a miraculous manner. He was translated when he was but three hundred and sixty-five years old, Gen. v. 23, which is not half the age of the shortest liver of the ten antediluvian patriarchs, ver. 28. By being the seventh from Adam, and by being translated so soon, all those ten patriarchs, except Adam, who was dead, and Noah, who was not born, were witnesses to Enoch's translation. This circumstance shews, that Providence intended that Enoch's translation should be greatly regarded by them; and that the proper inferences should be deduced from it. To this purpose is the observation of the son of Sirach: "That Enoch pleased the Lord, and was translated; being an example of repentance to all generations," Ecclesiasticus xlv. 16. And the Zohar says, that "by this translation, God assured the faithful of their resurrection to eternal life." Those who observed it too would see, that the second patriarch, probably the second man, who went out of the world, was translated to a far happier place. That place they would certainly consider to be paradise, if they did not actually see him taken thither. So the Arabic version, as quoted by Mr. Ainsworth, renders Heb. xi. 5, "By faith Enoch was translated into paradise." This seems to be implied in the phrase, "God took him;" that

is, the Being that represented God took him, namely, to paradise. And R. Menachem and the Zohar say, "that God shewed Enoch the tree of life in the midst of the garden." See R. Men. on Gen. v. It is observable, that the same word (*lakach*, took) is used here that is used Gen. ii. 15, concerning God's first placing Adam in paradise: "God took the man, and put him in the garden of Eden;" that is, God led him thither. Thither God led or translated him, while he walked with God. But "God drove him out of it," Gen. iii. 24, after he ran away from God, and hid himself, Gen. iii. 8. But Enoch having walked with God, as Adam had done at the first, God took him, viz. to paradise; or led or translated him to it, as He did Adam, when He first placed him there. This is agreeable to what I just now quoted from the Zohar and R. Menachem, "that God shewed Enoch the tree of life;" taking him and leading him to it; while the way was barred to all others by the cherubims, and the Glory pointing every way like a flaming sword. From hence probably the Psalmist expresses recovery to life, "by God's shewing him the path of life," Psal. xvi. 11. I the rather think so, from his adding, "in thy presence is fulness of joy." From hence it is too that we find the expression in the Psalms, of God's taking or receiving good men to Himself, as He did Enoch, and afterwards Elijah,

2 Kings ii. 9, 10. See Psal. xlix. 16. lxiii. 24. The Hebrew word is *lakach* in both these places. The LXX use λαμβάνω, or προσλαμβάνω, as the word they had used in the case of Elijah. But, as Moses adds, concerning Enoch, “he was not,” i. e. found again among the living: for as he would not return to them, they could not enter paradise, and get to him.

Enoch had been a prophet, and instructor of others, Jude, ver. 14; that is, he had been one who, being first illuminated or inspired by the Spirit of God, taught others. That this was the case of the prophets, even under the Old Testament, we learn from several passages of the Old Testament, but more expressly from the New, 2 Pet. i. 20, 21.

By “the Spirit of God,” I mean the next person to “the Word of God;” and He is the person who excels in discerning, revealing, and confirming the mind of God, by extraordinary or miraculous powers: see 1 Cor. ii. 10—13: having a peculiar sagacity and penetration for “searching into the deep things of God.” Ibid. But as the Word, before He was incarnate, personated the Most High God, and spoke in His name, under the Old Testament; and as the Spirit was then only called the Spirit of God, and represented as the Spirit of God; so their distinct personalities and characters could not

then be well understood : nor was there any occasion that they should.

Enoch appears to have been a prophet, by giving his son the name of Methuselah, which signifies, “he dieth, and the dart cometh.” By which he foretold, that as soon as Methuselah should die, the dart (that is, the flood) should come ; as it did in that very year. And this is probably what Jude refers to, when he says, that Enoch prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His holy ones (angels), to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them,” &c. Jude, ver. 14.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews assures us, that Enoch pleased God, and was translated through faith ; that is, through belief in the revealed will of God, and expectation of the promised reward. He was therefore taken up to assure all who walked with God of a future state of reward, and happiness in soul and body. Man’s body was first formed out of the dust, and then a soul was given him, as a conscious active principle, to animate, conduct, and govern that body. See Gen. ii. 7. Life is this conscious active principle’s continuing conscious and active in the body, animating, conducting and governing the body. Death is the conscious and active principle’s ceasing to be so conscious and active in the body, or in animat-

ing, conducting, and governing the body ; through their separation, the body going to the grave and becoming dust, and the soul going to Hades ; having no body to be conscious in, to animate, govern, or conduct. An account of the state of the soul in Hades may be seen, Eccl. ix. 10. Psal. xxxi. 17. lxxxviii. 10, 11. cxv. 17. Isa. xxxviii. 18. The spirit of a man is said “to return to God that gave it,” Eccles. xii. 7, to be in His custody and under His care, till the judgment. This is called the souls of the righteous “being in the hands of God,” Wisd. iii. 1, and “being with Christ,” Phil. i. 23, who is now the Lord both of the quick and dead. If therefore Enoch was to be immediately rewarded for his distinguished piety, particularly by being taken to paradise ; and if he was (as the son of Sirach elegantly says) “translated as an example of repentance to all generations,” Eccles. xliv. 16, he must be taken, i. e. both his body and his soul. That was continuing life to him, who was not to see death, Heb. xi. 5 (though by God’s taking him and leading him into paradise, “he was not,” Gen. v. 24, found again among the rest of mankind): and so also the resurrection, which is the recovering of life, by the soul’s being again united to its proper body, to be conscious in it, to animate, govern, and conduct it, is represented in the New Testament, as the state of happiness and reward to

all good men, as also of punishment to the wicked. See Matth. xxv. 46. Luke xiv. 14. Col. iii. 4. 2 Tim. iv. 8. Heb. xi. 13. 1 Pet. v. 4. 2 Pet. ii. 9.

Those in the family of Seth who acted up to the law of their nature, and to such farther rules as God had given to Enoch, or any others, and by them to the rest of mankind, animated by the same faith and hope, “believing that God was, and that He was a rewarder of them that diligently sought Him,” pleased Him, and were accepted by Him.¹

For though, these discoveries being very general and indeterminate, the reasonings of their faith could be but weak and doubtful too; yet their faith bearing a proportion to the matter, and the indistinctness of the revelation, must render them equally acceptable to God, as a faith of greater strength and efficacy might render others, if it bore but the same proportion to any clearer discoveries He should afterwards vouchsafe them. And if the virtue and piety of these early patriarchs, though animated by fainter hopes of a future reward, was equal to a virtue animated by stronger hopes in after-times; in that case, their virtue and piety must be at least as acceptable to God as that of the later

¹ Heb. xi. 4, 5, 6, 7. 12.

patriarchs, of Jews, or of Christians, in the other case.

SECTION XIII.—*The causes of the deluge.*

About the time of Noah, these two families, namely, of God and of the devil, which were to be at perpetual enmity, and were separated from each other by God's express order,¹ as well as by the interposition of His providence,² yet mingled again; appetite prevailing against the appointment of God. "For when these sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair, they took them wives, of all which they chose."³

From these intermarriages, which God had forbidden, corruption and violence spread over the face of the whole earth. And what less was to be expected from intermarriages arising from the heat of lust, which had overcome the fear of God, and all regards to His promises and commands, but a gigantic race, men of uncommon size and strength, uncultivated by the principles of reason and revelation, by which alone the appetites and passions of health and vigour are to be controuled?⁴ So that Noah, who perhaps was the only person that had kept free from this

¹ Gen. iii. 15. ² Ibid. iv. 11, 12, 14, 16. ³ Ibid. vi. 2.

⁴ Ibid. vi. 4.

fatal mixture, and the unhappy consequences of it, was the “only righteous or sincere person.”¹ Whereupon God resolved to sweep away this impious race of men with a flood, and to cleanse the earth from their corruption and violence; preserving none but Noah and his family alive, by whom, as the pure race of Seth, He would people a new world.

SECTION XIV.—*The blessing pronounced on Noah.*

For the sake of the singular piety of this good man, God seems to have blessed mankind immediately after the flood, so far as to have removed part of the curse, by taking off the greater sterility of the ground; the great frequency of blasts, murrain, and pestilence; the great perverseness of the seasons; by making mankind more fruitful than their antediluvian ancestors; and by restoring them to a greater degree of dominion over the brute part of the creation than they had had since the fall. All which was confirmed by a covenant, that “He would not renew His curse on the earth any more,” either by the inclemency of the heavens, by the barrenness of the earth, or by the total destruction of it. And also by a covenant with every living creature, that, in compensation to

¹ Gen. vi. 1.

them for being in this greater degree of subjection to mankind, “He would not destroy them or the earth any more.” He also gave them a new law of food, allowing them to eat flesh, provided it was not raw or bloody.¹

As these particulars embrace the whole of the covenant which God made with Noah, I will consider each in their order. The first is, by taking off the curse of the ground, at least in part. That is comprehended in the words, Gen. viii. 21, 22, which should have been rendered thus: “And Jehovah said in His heart, I will not for the future curse the ground for the sake of man, though the design of man’s heart be evil from his youth. Neither will I for the future smite every living being as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seed-time, harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, shall not fail.” Thus this place should be rendered from the Hebrew, as it is rendered by the LXX; and not, as it is in our version, “for,” which quite destroys the sense of the place. This contains a treble promise. 1. That God will remove the curse, or the barrenness of the ground. 2. That God would not smite the fruits of the earth so frequently with mildews, blasts, and locusts; nor beasts and men with murrain and

¹ See Gen. ix. 10, 11. 17—20, compared with chap. v. 29. viii. 20, 21, 22. ix. 1, 2, 3. 7. 9—18. See Dr. Sherlock’s *More sure Word of Prophecy*, p. 87—119.

pestilence, as He had done since the fall. The word “smite” is often thus applied in Scripture, but is never applied to the flood. See Exod. ix. 15. Numb. xiv. 12. Deut. xxviii. 22. Amos iv. 9. Hag. ii. 7. 3. That there should be more fruitful and regular seasons, spring and harvest, summer and winter. God had at first blessed Adam, but on the fall He cursed him ; and, among other curses, He cursed the ground for his sake, Gen. iii. 17. He more particularly cursed the ground to Cain and his descendants, Gen. iv. 12. And little doubt can be made, but that when Seth’s descendants intermarried with Cain’s, they partook in that curse. Sanchoniatho, who seems to have written the history of the descendants of Cain, as Moses wrote the history of the descendants of Seth, gives us an account of this barrenness of the ground, these blasts and unfruitful seasons. God now blesses Noah again. A blessing must be a removal of the first curse, and a restoration of the original blessing in part, or in whole. And this Lamech by the spirit of prophecy foretold, Gen. v. 29 ; “ And he (Lamech) called his son’s name Noah (as Enoch, by the like spirit of prophecy, called his son Methuselah, as I observed before), saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which Jehovah has cursed.” Noah likewise seems to

have understood this blessing in the same sense ; and thereupon, conceiving fresh hopes from it, immediately “began to be an husbandman ;” not barely a tiller of the ground for mere necessities, but a “planter of a vineyard,” Gen. ix. 25. And in all probability of the first vineyard that had been planted ; as we may infer from Moses’s silence concerning vineyards before, and his mentioning the planting one now ; as he does in the case of the first authors of other useful inventions. Noah’s planting a vineyard just after the flood intimates the great barrenness of the ground before the flood, and the prospect he had of its greater fertility now. Nor were his hopes disappointed ; for his vineyard yielded him but too generous a juice, unless he had known how to have made a better use of it, Gen. ix. 22. Yet I am far from thinking with Bishop Sherlock, that the curse of the ground was wholly taken off, and the earth restored to the fruitfulness of Paradise. Was there then, or is there now, any part of the earth that does not bring forth briars and thorns ? and does it now, or has it since yielded every tree bearing fruit of itself, without toil and labour, and the sweat of the brow ? Man in Paradise was indeed to dress the garden, as an agreeable exercise and recreation. But when will labour for mere diversion and amusement produce the crop to us that the earth can bring forth ? We

shall immediately see another instance where that prelate's hypothesis has carried things too far.

The second particular of Noah's blessing consists in making the postdiluvians more fruitful than their antediluvian ancestors. "For God said unto Noah and his sons, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth." That indeed was the blessing, that God originally gave to Adam, Gen. i. 28. But then, when God cursed the woman, "He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow, and thy conception: in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children." Hence it is, perhaps, that we find the antediluvians to have had comparatively but few children; at least, if we are to take our measures by Noah, the last of them. He was five hundred years old when he begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth; and though he lived about one hundred years more before, and near three hundred and fifty years more after the flood, yet he had no more sons. For of these three (sons of his) "was the whole earth overspread," Gen. ix. 19. Now let any one compare the accounts of the generations of men after the flood, and see, whether they did not multiply much faster, notwithstanding their lives were shortened. Japheth had seven sons, Ham had four, and Shem five. Japheth's eldest son had six, and his two sons seven; and his third son eleven; and Joktan,

Eber's eldest son, and the great-grandson of Shem by Arphaxad, had the same number. According to the Hebrew copies, the multiplication of mankind was such, that Nimrod, who was but the great-grandson of Noah, had a kingdom, the beginning of which was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calnah, in the land of Shinar, Gen. x. 10. The words of a grant must be supposed to have a proper meaning, and to operate. And I take the only meaning, that these words, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth," when spoken to Noah and his sons, can well be supposed to have, so as to operate, is, that as the earth should be more fruitful than it had been; so should his sons and descendants be also more fruitful than their antediluvian ancestors. And perhaps, in order thereto, the sorrows that were multiplied on Eve in conceiving and bringing forth children, might be lessened and abated, after the flood. But I do not see how one can imagine that they were entirely removed; as Bishop Sherlock's hypothesis about the removal of the curse supposes; in opposition to the history of all nations and ages; and to the daily experience of mankind.

III. God said, "And the fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the field, upon every fowl of the air, and upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all

the fishes of the sea," Gen. ix. 2. God had given this dominion to our first parents in innocence, Gen. i. 28. But it is probable, that after they disobeyed God, the creatures became intractable and savage towards them. Perhaps, instead of being useful to man in tilling the ground (for he was in the sweat of his own face to eat bread, Gen. iii. 19), they often rushed upon him, and destroyed him. But God now takes off that part of the curse; and as He had given man a greater power over the vegetable, so He now restores man to his forfeited dominion over the brute part of the creation. For He adds, "that He will require their blood at the hand of every beast," ver. 5; which intimates, that He had not required it hitherto, but had suffered them to destroy mankind: as it must be allowed He does, who does not require blood at the hand of the beast, who sheds it. And farther, He not only gives them to him for food, and to that end made them more subject to him; but made them so manageable, as to render his labour in husbandry attended with less pain, and greater success. There was the greater reason for God to give him this greater dominion over the brute creatures, and to promise to make them fruitful, and to give them flesh for food; because, as Noah's family consisted but of eight persons, they might otherwise have justly feared, that

the brute creatures, who multiply much faster than mankind, would quickly overrun them.

IV. God made a covenant, that He would not destroy them or the cattle, or the produce of the ground, any more by a flood. The sign of which covenant the rainbow was to be for the future. And whereas God is said to make a covenant expressly with every living creature, Gen. ix. 10; and whereas it is repeated four times afterwards, namely, ver. 12. 15, 16, 17, if this covenant is not a bare promise, but may be supposed to imply any condition as well as a promise, I should take the covenant with every living creature to be this: That in consideration of God's making them more subject to man, so as some of them should be for his food, and others of them the instruments of his labour; in case they should become so subject, God would not destroy the race of brute creatures by a flood any more, Gen. ix. 8—18. Thus explained, every branch of the blessing, as delivered by Moses, Gen. viii. 21, 22. ix. 1—18, has a distinct signification: as to be sure they must, unless we suppose Moses to be a very inaccurate lawyer and historian, contrary to the known character of the writer of this book.

In a word, I apprehend that the covenant with Noah, and the occasion on which God was pleased to make it, may be thus truly and

briefly represented, according to the precise order it stands in Moses's history. God, who had been so provoked by the wickedness of man, as to have repented that He had made him, and who therefore had destroyed him, was so appeased by Noah's burnt-offering, and the pious dispositions of his mind which attended it, that He repented (as the Septuagint version has it) of His anger towards mankind; and for Noah's sake (as He did for Abraham's sake afterwards in another case), graciously makes the following promise, as it were to compensate the human race for the destruction that He had brought upon it; namely, that He would not curse the ground any longer for man's sake; that He would not any longer continue to smite so frequently every living thing with blasts and mildews, with unseasonable weather, and with pestilence and murrain, as He had hitherto done, since the fall; but would bless the earth with proper seasons and fruitfulness, as long as it should remain an habitation for mankind, Gen. viii. 21, 22. That He would make mankind more fruitful than their antediluvian ancestors, ch. ix. 1. 7. That He would likewise restore them to a part of that dominion over the brute creatures, which had been lost since the fall; so as that they should not only be subservient to their use, but to their food, ver. 2, 3. And lastly, that He would not

destroy the earth, and them (whom He had thus once more blessed with fruitfulness), by a flood any more. And for as much as He had made the brute part of the creation subject to them, not only for their use, but their food ; that in order to make the brute creatures some compensation, He would not destroy them again by a flood, any more than mankind, to whom He had afresh given them. And to the intent that mankind might be the more fully assured of this, He would make the rainbow the sign of His covenant, that so they might not be afraid, when they should see it rain again ; but might consider it as a means to fulfil the first part of God's promise, that seed-time, &c. shall not fail. And as all this great blessing on Noah and on his posterity, and all their future race, was derived through the pious disposition of mind that accompanied Noah's sacrifice, he is therefore represented as the most powerful intercessor of the Old Testament. To this purpose is what God says to the prophet Ezekiel, ch. xiv. 14. 16. 18. 20 : " Though Noah, Daniel and Job were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith Jehovah God." Noah is placed first, not as being first in point of time, for then Job must have been before Daniel ; but as the most powerful of them all ; having derived blessings on all mankind by his intercession, as Daniel

had done upon his people, and Job upon his three friends. See Dan. ix. 20, 21, and Job xlii. 8, 9.

This covenant was in itself a very great blessing. But it could not but be infinitely greater, if they understood that this covenant, which removed a great part of the curse, was a pledge and an earnest of another great blessing, which should remove the whole, and give a superior blessing to that which our first parents had lost ; a covenant, which is presently intimated, Gen. ix. 26, 27, and which God in a few generations after made and ratified with Abraham, the father of the faithful. If they had no such distinct future expectation immediately and expressly given them by God, yet it was but natural for them to conceive hopes from this great instance of His goodness and clemency, after such an amazing desolation, that He would go on in due time, according to the first promise made to mankind, to deliver them from all the evil, that had been brought by the serpent, and that still remained upon them. Such a performance of part of what they had all along expected, might well support the minds of good men, till God saw fit to appear to Abraham, and to assure all men in and by him, that if they would be obedient, they should be recovered from death (the great curse pronounced on mankind), to a state where there should be no

curse, and where all tears should be wiped away from their eyes. And perhaps it is on both these accounts, that the epistle to the Hebrews speaks of Noah as the first, whom he stiles an heir, among his list of worthies, chap. xi., among which, four only are said to be heirs. “ By faith Noah being warned of God of things not yet seen—prepared an ark to the saving of his house : by the which—he became *heir* of the righteousness of faith.” The meaning of heir of righteousness, is heir of that which righteousness produced to him. That was the blessing (or blessedness, as St. Paul styles it from the Psalmist, Rom. iv. 7—10), the blessing which came on Noah, on his having the righteousness of faith. That blessing was not barely his being saved from the flood, or the blessing God gave to the ground in taking off its curse, or barrenness ; in removing the frequent blasts, in giving regular seasons, or making Noah or his sons fruitful, or in giving him a greater dominion over the beasts of the field, and a promise not to destroy the earth again ; but in delivering him from the most bitter part of the original curse, which yet remained ; which deliverance Noah intimates when he blesses Jehovah as the God (or father) of Shem. A plain intimation, that he understood that Shem was adopted to the inheritance of a son of God. And which perhaps he might

have some reason to expect would be more expressly given and ratified afterwards; as in fact it was, viz. to Abraham, one of Shem's descendants, in the tenth generation. This is the more probable, because Noah, in blessing Jehovah as the God of Shem, appears to have done it prophetically, from several circumstances. For it appears, 1. That he knew what had been done in his sleep. 2. That what he says on this occasion is in the future tense, "God shall enlarge Japheth, and He shall dwell in the tents of Shem," &c. It is in the same style that the prophetic blessings of Jacob on his twelve sons, and Moses's on the twelve tribes, run. 3. The blessing of Shem was distinct from Japheth's in part, though it was also common in part. 4. Though Japheth is the elder brother, and equally concerned in the act of piety towards him, yet Shem's blessing is superior to Japheth's.

SECTION XV.—*The blessing pronounced on Shem.*

This seems to have been intimated by Noah, in what he says prophetically of Shem; promising a farther and peculiar blessing, when he blesses Jehovah, "the God of Shem."¹

So it should have been rendered, and not

¹ Gen. ix. 26.

"the Lord God of Shem." He that reads the Bible in our English version may easily see, when Jehovah should have been put, instead of Lord, by observing, whether Lord be printed in small capitals. If he will always for Lord, where it is in small capitals, read Jehovah, the translation will run as it ought; and much more intelligibly and properly, than as it stands in our version, "The Lord God." Our translators have in this followed the LXX injudiciously, who always render Jehovah *Κύριος*. The learned Mr. Ainsworth always preserves the word Jehovah in his version of the Pentateuch, and the Psalms. But this by the bye. Jehovah is here called "the God of Shem." And this is the first time, that the Almighty is said in Scripture, to be any one's God. The full import and meaning of this expression will well deserve our attention. God's being the God of Shem must denote a farther blessing than any which had been granted by God to Noah and his sons in general, or to Japheth in particular, the eldest of them. For being the God of Shem, is being the Father of Shem. And the inheritance that God, considered as a Father, is ever said in Scripture to give to any of His sons, is life; unless it be when it relates to the adoption of Abraham and his posterity to some earthly inheritance, to which they had no right by birth or acquisition, or any other

way than by Divine donation ; but still withal an inheritance, which will be shewn hereafter to have been the pledge of a better.

SECTION XVI.—*The causes of the dispersion at Shinar, and the state of the World before the call of Abraham.*

On the other hand, the unbelieving and disobedient part of the family of Noah, which was Ham and his descendants, particularly Canaan, seem to have renounced their share in the blessings which belonged to the children of God ; and to have refused to obey the order that had been given them to disperse.

The account of the confusion and dispersion of Babel, and what gave occasion to it, seems to stand thus in the history of Genesis, as far as can be collected from the hints we meet with there. Immediately after the flood, God had blessed Noah and his sons, and given them this command and privilege, among others, that they should “replenish the earth,” Gen. ix. 1. But that they could not do, without dispersing themselves in some convenient time. Besides that the sons of men were ever to be separated from the sons of God, see Gen. xi. About the days of Peleg, the fifth from Noah by Shem, God seems to have given a more particular order for their dispersing themselves,

and dividing the earth according to Noah's three sons and their families, Gen. x. 25. 32. Probably God gave them this command by the hand of Noah, who lived long after this ; as the land of Canaan was in aftertimes divided by Joshua, according "as God had commanded by the hand of Moses," Josh. xiv. 1, 2. It fell out, as a colony of some of Ham's descendants (called here "the sons of men," Gen. xi. 5, in opposition to "the sons of God"), and probably some of his descendants by Canaan (for a reason I shall give presently), and it may be of some few of Shem's, that might mix with them, were travelling from the East, in pursuance of the order that had been given, that they found a rich plain in the land of Shinar, where Nimrod, the grandson of Ham, their common ancestor, had first laid the foundation of his oppressive monarchy, when he thrust out Ashur, the son of Shem, from thence, and obliged him to retire to Nineveh, Gen. x. 11. This colony resolved to continue together somewhere, as the best means to defeat the prophetic curse that Noah had pronounced on Canaan, their great ancestor, and his posterity, when Noah foretold, that while Jehovah would be "the God of Shem, and would enlarge Japheth, so as that he should dwell in the tents of Shem (that is, become so fruitful, as at last to stretch himself to Shem's border or division), Canaan should be their

servant," Gen. ix. 25—28. And what should be intended by this order of Noah's for dispersing themselves, but a means of accomplishing this his prediction? As therefore, for these reasons, they resolved to continue together in some place or other, so this place they pitched on in particular, as best fitted for their purpose; encouraged to it by its inviting situation, and by the success that Nimrod had had there against Ashur. And as they resolved to continue here together, so they resolved to build them "a strong city," to protect themselves, and "an high tower," from whence they might annoy all that, in the confidence of the patriarchal prediction, should go about to assail them, and where they might at once have all the advantages that could arise either from an high or a low situation; being fully determined, by all possible means, to try, whether, instead of becoming the servants of Shem and Japheth, and their descendants, they might not have as good success against them, and thereby get themselves as great a name in the world, as Nimrod, on his good fortune against one of Shem's posterity, had gotten to himself before.—But the Jehovah Angel came down from heaven, in order to disperse them; and came down in the same shape and appearance in which He had resided in the world

from the creation till He retired, but with the most visible marks of wrath and displeasure. This terrified them, and disturbed their imaginations, to such a degree, as to make them forget their language (which was then “the language of the whole earth,” ver. 9), and not understand one another any longer. Thereby the work was forced to cease; and they then, seeing it in vain to go on to oppose the counsels of Heaven any more, pursued their intended journey; and so were scattered and dispersed into that part of the world where they had received their orders to go, Gen. xi. 5—10. If this be a just account of the matter, as it seems to be, it will appear, first, that the forgetting or confounding the language they, as well as all the rest of the earth, then spoke, was not universal, but only peculiar to this part of Canaan’s family that went about the building of Babel; and, in the next place, that when they forgot their old language, they were not endued with any new one, but were farther punished with the want of one, till, in process of time, and by slow degrees, they formed one. This is an easy account of this matter, and will remove the great difficulties that have been made against Moses’s account of the dispersion; from Jehovah’s confounding the language of this colony, whose language till then had been

the language of the whole earth. So Moses is to be understood, ver. 9, when he says, “Therefore the name of it is called Babel, because Jehovah did there confound the language of all the earth.”

By thus refusing to disperse, they appear to have become “the family of the devil:” and accordingly to have been marked out as such by the curse of God in many remarkable instances, as had been the case of Cain before the flood.¹ These instances of God’s severe vengeance were sometimes necessary to prevent such unhappy mixtures between these two families as had brought on the flood, and were, in their natural tendency, motives to repentance: and if they had not that effect, yet must have rendered the justice of God, in any future punishment, the more conspicuous, and at the same time have confirmed the children and family of God in their faith and obedience. Under this head, to speak of them once for all, may be ranked the confusion and dispersion of Babel, the destruction of Sodom, the plagues of Egypt, the extirpation of the seven nations, &c. And it deserves our observation, that as temporal protection and blessings were pledges of a future inheritance to the children of God, so

¹ Gen. iv. 11—22. Wisdom, xii. 11.

temporal curses and judgments inflicted on the seed of the serpent were notices to them, that they had forfeited all title to a future inheritance ; and that all that remained for them was, to recover it by repentance.

Notwithstanding this universal desolation by the flood, in nine generations, the knowledge and worship of the one only true God, and all virtue, had in a manner forsaken the earth ; and the world, apostatising from their Maker, became worshippers of the devil and false gods. As the worship that had been paid to the true God was paid to Him very much under the notion of a Father ; it seems highly probable to me, that idolatry might be introduced under the same name ; since false religion, especially at the first, would certainly have a near semblance of the true : and it has been an ancient and common observation, that to ape God has been the constant affectation of the devil. Every one knows that Jupiter was called Pater. And the Phallagogia, an idolatry thought by many learned men to be extremely ancient, gives great countenance to this opinion ; especially if a notion which Spencer quotes and countenances be just (and which seems highly probable), that circumcision was appointed, among other reasons, to obviate this idolatry.¹ But whether

¹ See Spencer, de Leg. Hebr. Rit. lib. i. cap. 4. sect. 3.

this particular notion be just or no, yet it is certain, that idolatry was so general, that even the family of blessed Shem was not entirely free from a lower kind of it; they worshipping images, or Teraphim, together with the true God.¹ However, God winked at this, suffering their manners, without sending any messenger to reclaim them.

SECTION XVII.—*The blessings pronounced on Abraham, and the meaning of the promise made to that Patriarch—“ In blessing I will bless thee.”*

But, soon after this idolatry began, God called Abraham out of “Ur of the Chaldees,” choosing him (the fourteenth from Enoch, who probably was the only person that had kept himself free from it,² as Noah had from the forbidden intermarriages) to be the head of God’s family in the world by express covenant; and in which He designed to preserve the true religion³ (consisting in a belief of, and in obedience and submission to, the one true God):

¹ Gen. xxxi. 19. Josh. xxiv. 2.

² Josh. xxiv. 2. Nehem. ix. 7, 8. Joseph. Antiq. lib. i. Maimon. in Misn. tom. 1. Treatise of Idol. c. i. sect. 1, 2, 3.

³ Gen. xviii. 19. N.B. Before the reader goes any farther in reading the Dispensation of Abraham, he is desired to read the Exposition of several portions of Abraham’s history, at the end of this Essay.

and by the means of whose travels, distinguished protection, and vouchsafements, He would give such as were well-disposed in Canaan and Egypt, and elsewhere, an opportunity to enquire after Him.¹

From a regard to Abraham's singular and unexampled faith and obedience on the greatest trials, God promised to "bless him;"² to "count his faith for righteousness;"³ and to "be his God."⁴ By these expressions it may appear, that God gave Abraham a promise to recover him from death, the remaining part of the original curse, which had not yet been taken off to Noah; and confirmed the blessing implied in Noah's blessing Jehovah as "the God of Shem," by giving thus a descendant of his a title to everlasting life in the paradisaical Canaan (called "the heavenly"⁵), as the inheritance of an adopted son of God.

First, God promised to bless him, Gen. xii. 3. This expression carries a great deal in it; no less than the promising Abraham to recover him from death, the most bitter part of the first curse, that was not yet clearly taken away; and to adopt him to everlasting life. This I will now endeavour to prove.

¹ Gen. xii. 17. 19. xiv. 18—21. xxi. 18. xxv. 3—7. xxvi. 6—34.

² Ibid. xii. 3.

³ Ibid. xv. 6.

⁴ Ibid. xvii. 7, 8.

⁵ Heb. xi. 16.

But, before I represent the proof that arises to this purpose, from this expression, and other expressions relating to Abraham which I shall consider hereafter, I must desire the reader to consider, that the proof I am to give of this point, *is a proof from history, and not from a system of doctrine.* This I say, to shew why the reader ought not to expect many express texts to this purpose; but only such as may fairly occur from incidental passages in an history, which was addressed to a people, who were in good measure apprised of many of the great facts before, from tradition, and the earliest monuments of antiquity, and which was written in order to engage them to fear God, from an orderly account of what His dealings had been hitherto with mankind, and what expectations they might entertain from Him for the future.

When Moses therefore tells us, that “Jehovah blessed Abraham,” what ideas are we to suppose that Moses had, and intended to convey to the Israelites? And what are the ideas we are to suppose that this expression raised in their minds? It will be readily allowed, that these words are *granting* words all along in Moses’s history. Nor can it be denied, that it must be something of great importance that Moses would introduce God as giving to Abraham, when “He blessed him;” considering

that Abraham is represented as an high and singular instance of the greatest piety in the degenerate age wherein he lived ; and under the greatest trials that Adam or any of his children ever underwent ; and also considering that Abraham was the father of that nation to which Moses wrote, and at the head of which he himself then was, and which at that time God had taken to Himself for an holy and a peculiar people.

This we may be assured of in the general. But to be a little more particular : I desire the following things may be put together ; many of which are insisted on, or hinted at, in the foregoing part of this Essay.

1 . That God blessed Adam and Eve ; and when God gives a blessing, we may be sure the grant operates and conveys something that is considerable, otherwise the grant would be trifling or illusory. We find by Moses's history, that what God blessed our first parents with, was fruitfulness, Gen. i. 28 ; dominion over all the other creatures, *ibid.* ; food, ver. 29 ; a pleasant and fruitful garden, chap. ii. 8—15 ; with the means of immortality, namely, the tree of life, ver. 9 ; and with a covering, which was most probably a glory.

But that on their disobedience a curse was pronounced on them, instead of the blessing. The peculiar curse on Eve seems to be a great

degree of unfruitfulness: “ I will greatly multiply thy sorrow in thy conception,” and in bringing forth children, ver. 16, in opposition to the original blessing: “ Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth,” chap. i. 28, and subjection to her husband. The curse pronounced on Adam was care, toil, and sorrow, all the days of his life, by reason of the curse of the ground; and that he should return to the dust, out of which he was taken, chap. iii. 17, 18, 19.

2. That there was still a farther curse pronounced and inflicted on the ground, that Cain should till, after he had slain his brother, Gen. iv. 12. From whence he (Cain) seems to have left off tilling the ground, and to have betaken himself to other arts; such as were necessary to build a city, ver. 17. And his descendants seem likewise to have quitted the tillage of the ground after his example, and to have turned herdsmen, ver. 20, musicians, ver. 21, and artificers in brass and iron, ver. 22, &c. which also agrees with the history of Sanchoniatho.

This farther curse on the tillage of the ground, pronounced on Cain, and that probably followed his descendants, seems to have been a mark of their being the avowed family of the devil, and was agreeable to other curses that always followed that family in future ages.

3. That it is probable that Seth’s descendants

did continue to till the ground, and had a produce from it, though with great labour and toil : but it was revealed to Lamech, about six hundred years before the flood, that in Noah's time they should receive some comfort, or blessing, concerning the work and toil of their hands, because of the (original) curse which the Lord had pronounced on the ground, Gen. v. 29, namely, after the fall.

4. That after the flood God took off a great part of the original curse, blessing Noah and his sons in many instances, as He did Adam and Eve at their creation. God bids them "be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth," Gen. ix. 1, and thereby probably took off part of the great sorrow in bearing and bringing forth children, that might be the occasion of less fruitfulness before. But God does not stop here, but in part also takes off the curse from the ground, or its sterility, chap. viii. 21 : "I will not for the future curse the ground for man's sake." He likewise promises not to send blasts and pestilence, as He had done, and to give favourable seasons, ver. 22. Moses accordingly observes, that, after the flood, "Noah began to be an husbandman," Gen. ix. 20. Not barely a tiller of the ground for mere necessities (as Noah's ancestors had been all along) ; but a planter of a vineyard, for the superfluities of life ; expecting greater fertility

from the removal of the curse, and the grant of a blessing. And Moses farther acquaints us, that his expectation was not disappointed, ver. 21.

Lastly, God restores Noah and his sons to a greater dominion over the beasts of the earth, the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea, than they had since the fall. Perhaps the making the beasts of the field more tractable, was one way, by which God removed the curse of the ground, and added to its fruitfulness, as well as to the food of mankind. In every instance of God's blessing any one, as I have already observed, we must suppose some curse removed, and some favour granted ; and in the case of God's blessing Noah and his sons, we see the curse, which had been pronounced at the fall, removed in such part, as it seems to have been God's design to remove it, till there shall be no more curse ; except the last part of it, namely, " 'That dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return.' "

When God blesses Abraham then, Gen. xii. 2. xxii. 17, it must, as in the case of our first parents, and in the case of Noah, denote the removing some part of the original curse, and restoring the original blessing, in part or in whole ; or giving an equal blessing, if not a greater than the first. What less can be imported by the phrase, used Gen. xxii. 17, " In

blessing I will bless thee;" especially as it is introduced on so great an occasion as the offering up the heir of the promise, and as it is confirmed by an oath? Or what less can be imported, when "in him (or in blessing him) God declares, that He blessed all the families or nations of the earth;" that is, all that should imitate him in his faith and obedience? The blessing which arose from taking off the other parts of the curse, the rest of the families of the earth, as well as the descendants of Noah (to whom those blessings were granted), partook of already. Now, since the other parts of the curse had been removed in the blessing to Noah and his sons, what can this most solemn blessing of Abraham, and in him of all the nations of the earth, in the language of those early times (when the blessing and curse on our first parents was so deeply impressed on their minds, and so thoroughly understood), carry less in it, than restoring Abraham expressly to immortality in Paradise (not indeed without tasting death, but) after death; the great and most bitter part of the original curse, which had not yet been expressly taken away? So that this expression plainly implies "adoption to everlasting life," in the language of these times. And accordingly St. Paul calls "the blessing of Abraham, the promise and blessing of the Spirit;" that is, the promise and blessing of the

resurrection ; of which the Spirit is the Earnest and the Efficient, Gal. iii. 14. By this, Noah's blessing Jehovah as the God of Shem was fully accomplished ; and that Jehovah was the God of Shem was fully confirmed and established.

The next part of the blessing upon Abraham was, "that his faith should be counted for righteousness," Gen. xv. 6 : it is there said, " And Abraham believed in Jehovah, and He counted it to him for righteousness." Abraham's belief in Jehovah is always represented, both in the Old and New Testament, not as a bare belief of a proposition, but as an high trust in God, and faithfulness to Him in the greatest trials, which is in itself the greatest virtue, and a virtue that influenced his whole conduct ; making him, at God's command, quit his idolatrous country and friends, travel into a country he did not know, and where he was not known ; profess his faith in the One true God, and teach his family to fear and worship Him, notwithstanding the dangers to which it exposed him in a wicked, idolatrous, and strange land ; making him, moreover, submit to the painful rite of circumcision, put away Hagar and his son Ishmael, and at last be ready to offer up his only legitimate son Isaac, the heir of the promise.

Such a faith as this, however, was not, strictly speaking, righteousness, which is an entire.

perfect, and constant conformity to the original law of the great Father of our first parents : but it was what God now assured Abraham (Adam's descendant by Seth and Shem), that He mercifully "counted, or reckoned, for righteousness:" declaring this now as the gracious, and abated, or secondary rule of his family here below ; that he, who, from a belief of his truth and power, would regulate the main of his conduct according to the rule He had given him, should be counted righteous ; though he might, through the suddenness of some great surprise, and the strength of his appetites or passions, sometimes deviate from it, as Abraham in some instances did. Now we are sure that the reckoning, or judgment, of God is just. For the righteousness of a man is a conformity of the temper and actions of a man to some rule that he is under. And when the judge, who has a competent jurisdiction, pronounces that a man has acted up to that rule, that man may then be properly said to be righteous ; though the rule by which he is judged be a rule of fit and proper grace, relaxation, and favour (from a weakness and inability to observe the first original rule), and not that original and strict rule itself.

Now, it seems to have been the original connection and constitution of things, settled and framed by the wise Contriver and Disposer of

all things, that life (that is, existence, enjoyment, or happiness) should be the consequence of righteousness, or a conformity to that law or rule which man was under, either as a created or as an adopted child of God ; and that death (that is, a cessation of existence and enjoyment, or happiness) should be the consequence of unrighteousness. The reason of which seems to be this : that if a reasonable being, as he is capable of a rule, should act by it, and thereby answer the end of his being, and act reasonably, he should go on to be, and enjoy all good. On the other hand, if he would not act up to that rule, and answer the end of his being, but act unreasonably, he should cease to be. Besides, righteousness has a natural tendency to life and happiness, and would produce it, were it not for external causes that hinder it ; and unrighteousness has a natural tendency to death, either by being contrary to our health, to peace with our neighbours, and (both from that consideration and immediately) to the peace of our own minds.

And thus, at least, it appears plainly, that in fact things have been in all God's dispensations. The tree of life, which was in the midst of the garden of Eden, was a full declaration, that if Adam was obedient or righteous, he should live : and he was expressly threatened, that if he was disobedient or unrighteous, he should

die. That very threatening farther implied, and very strongly, that if he was not disobedient or unrighteous, he should not die; that is, that he should live.

By the law of Moses, "every one was cursed that continued not in all things written in the law to do them," Deut. xxvii. 26. Gal. iii. 10. "And the soul that sinned was to die," Ezek. xviii. 4. See also 1 Sam. xii. 13. On the contrary, obedience to the law of Moses was the righteousness of the children of Israel, Deut. vi. 25. The law farther says expressly, "That he that followed what was altogether just, should live," Deut. xvi. 20. xxx. 6. And as God first intimated to our first parents, so Moses afterwards tells the Israelites, that "righteousness is their life," Lev. xviii. 5. The prophet Ezekiel also says, of all God's statutes and judgments, that if "a man do them, he shall live in them," Ezek. xx. 11. 19. 21. See likewise Luke x. 25. 28. Rom. x. 5.

Agreeably hereto also the Scripture represents things, not only in the law of Moses, when it tells us, that "righteousness is our life;" that is, so naturally, so closely, so inseparably connected with life, as that it may be said to be life itself; but in the law of Christ, when it also tells us, that "the wages of sin is death, whilst the gift of God is eternal life," Rom. vi. 23; it farther adds, that "He that keepeth the command-

ments of God hath a right to the tree of life," Rev. xxii. 14 : that he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption, and he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting ;" as the natural production of sowing to the one or to the other, Gal. vi. 8. And, lastly, it assures us to this purpose by a similitude taken from animal productions, as it did in the last cited passage by a similitude taken from the increase of vegetables, that "lust, when it is conceived, bringeth forth sin ; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death," James i. 15.

All this is so exactly true, and in so exact a proportion, that He who was the Son of God, having been not only perfectly righteous by the original law which man was under, but by a superior and extraordinary law of righteousness (which, from His extraordinary love of righteousness, and His extraordinary hatred of iniquity, He voluntarily put Himself under ; and by virtue of which alone, He who was perfectly righteous became subject to death) ; I say, He had not only life (in a few hours after death, without seeing corruption) for Himself, but in Himself ; that is, a power to give it to all that shall be, for the main, conformed to Him in the lower rule of righteousness that He was under, as much as all die who are conformed to Adam in sin and unrighteousness, or in a deviation

from that lower rule of righteousness. So that as death actually first entered the world by Adam's sin, life from the dead first enters by Christ (on His obedience to death), as the first-fruits of them that sleep. See Rom. v. 12—21.

In fine ; as we thus see that righteousness and life are in fact inseparably connected, in the three great dispensations of God to mankind, in the reason of things, and in several plain assertions of Scripture, and in an exact proportion to that degree of righteousness the righteous person had ; it follows, that when God declared to Abraham, "that He counted his faith for righteousness," God declared that He adopted Abraham (as a son that conformed himself to the law of his family) to the inheritance of everlasting life. But indeed there is this difference between inheriting life by virtue of the strict original rule, and inheriting it by virtue of the secondary and equitable rule ; that he that observes the original and strict rule of righteousness perfectly and constantly, shall enjoy life without tasting death and corruption as a debt ; whereas he that only conforms to the secondary and equitable rule of righteousness, yet yielding sometimes to the law of unrighteousness, he shall indeed taste of death and corruption for some time ; but shall still indefeasibly inherit life, after being recovered from death and corruption (though still by a well-proportioned

grace and favour), and be saved from the second death, or from wrath to come.

SECTION XIX.—*On the meaning of the declaration of the Almighty to Abraham, "I will be thy God."*

In addition to the former promises of the Almighty to Abraham, it was declared, Gen. xvii. 7, 8, "I will be thy God." Let us enquire into the probable meaning of this expressive part of the gradual revelation. Sir Isaac Newton has fully proved (*Princip.* p. 482), that the term God is a relative term founded in dominion. That being supposed, the term God must signify the dominion of a master, a father, or a king: for all sorts of dominion and authority may be reduced to one of these.

Now God may figuratively have been always said to be the Master of mankind, and they may be said to have been always His servants; inasmuch as in many things God resembles a master, and mankind His servants; and He is therefore often mentioned as such in Scripture; though never till after the death of Abraham: yet God is not properly and strictly ever considered as a master, in any part of Scripture; because He has never entered into covenant with mankind in the character of a master with his servants.

In like manner, God may always figuratively

have been said to have had a kingdom ruling over all ; inasmuch as there are many resemblances between God's power over all things, and the power a king has over his subjects. But God is never so much as mentioned as a king, even incidentally, in Scripture, till about the time that He became the king of the Israelites by covenant at Mount Sinai : nor had He a people till then. Afterwards indeed, He also by covenant became the Supreme King of all Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles.

But God had children, or a family, before He had a kingdom, and a people ; even from the first man and woman. And therefore, whenever the term *God* occurs in Scripture, before either of the periods, in which the Supreme Being became by covenant the King of the Israelites, and of Christians, in a strict and proper sense, the term *God* must import the other relation of power and authority, viz. that of a father ; agreeably to the authority that then prevailed in the world, which was family or patriarchal ; and that God must, from the very nature of things, have been ever considered as a father, even in the patriarchal period, before He was a king over a people, will fully appear from what follows :

1. That Adam was created an earthly and animal son of God ; having no other father but God ; being made like Him in his moral per-

fections, and vested with dominion, the bliss of paradise, glory and immortality, as an inheritance suited to the high relation he bore to God. All which carries in it the whole notion of a father, in the most strict, proper, and precise sense of the word.

2. That Adam by his disobedience lost the moral image or likeness of God, and was thereupon divested of the inheritance of a son of God, driven out of Paradise, kept from returning to it, made subject to toil, care, vexation, diseases and death; and instead of the glory which he had in innocence, a badge of his sonship to God; God made him coats of the skins of beasts, as a clothing, that might serve to shew him, to what a low state he had reduced himself, by suffering his appetites and passions to get the better of his reason. From whence this moral was plainly held forth to him and his posterity, that “he being in honour, and without understanding, was become like the beasts that perish.” God also gave him a plain intimation, that if he would continue to obey the serpent, he must share in his peculiar curse.

3. That Adam forfeited this inheritance, not only for himself, but for his posterity; begetting men not in the image or likeness of God; heirs of dominion, bliss, glory, and immortality; but in “his own likeness, after his image, sons of

men, and heirs of his curse :” namely, toil, care, vexation, diseases, and death.

4. That Cain being born an heir of the curse, and at last not barely continuing a son of man, but becoming the seed of the serpent, imitating him (in being a liar and a murderer, as he was), notwithstanding God’s gracious admonition and caution to the contrary, became the head and founder of the avowed family of the devil in the world ; and was accordingly marked as such by peculiar curses, which seem to have followed him and his posterity.

5. That, notwithstanding this, whoever from the sons of men, and heirs of death, became like unto God ; resembling Him in purity, justice, and mercy, might form inferences and hopes, that he might become a son or a child of God, through adoption to a suitable inheritance after death. A child of this character God gave to our first parents in Seth, instead of righteous Abel, whom Cain slew. He and his descendants were the avowed family of God in the world, “being called by His name,” Gen. iv. 26, and being expressly styled the children or “Sons of God,” Gen. vi. 1.

6. To give the sons of God a more assured and lively notion of what their inheritance by adoption was, God translated Enoch to Paradise ; thereby assuring good men, that they should enjoy a future state of happiness in soul

and body. For Enoch was translated after being the first that prophesied, and after he had all along walked with God as Adam had done in innocence ; who had conversed with Jehovah God in the garden, till sin and guilt made him afraid of Him, run away from Him, and hide himself. Good men at that age must have concluded by the rules of analogy, that though Enoch's eminent and distinguished piety was rewarded with immortality by translation ; yet that a lower degree of piety than his, if sincere, would meet with immortality as its reward, in some way, and at some time or another.

7. There could not be a proof of a more wicked disposition, than for any of the sons of God to marry with the daughters of men, i. e. the daughters of the family of the devil ; not only as these marriages were against God's order, and the interposition of His providence ; but as it was expressing the utmost contempt of God's family, and as it was at the same time a casting off all fear of the peculiar curse that was the portion of the family of the devil ; and therefore, those of the family of God, who made such intermarriages, must thereby have become the family of the devil.

8. Noah, being the only righteous person, or the only person who walked with God, and abstained from this impious mixture, was the only person treated as a son of God, by the

peculiar protection which God vouchsafed to him and to his family, from the total destruction, which He sent on the avowed family of the devil.

9. Noah intimates, that “*Jehovah* would be the *God* of *Shem*,” Gen. ix. 26. Or the father of *Shem*, in a way, in which He would not (at least immediately) be the father of *Japheth*, the elder brother; or of *Canaan*, the son of *Ham*. All which is prophetically said, not of the persons of *Shem*, *Japheth*, or *Canaan*; but of their descendants.

10. Accordingly the descendants of *Canaan* had great and peculiar curses attending them, in the dispersion of *Babel*, the destruction of the cities of the plain, the extirpation of the seven nations, &c.

11. On the other hand, God expressly blessed *Abraham*, a descendant of *Shem* (and the only one who had walked before God, and kept himself free from idolatry), counted his faith for righteousness, and became *his God*: which God had never expressly promised to be to any one before.

12. Hence it is, that *God*, and *Father*, or terms that imply them, are terms reciprocally used in the Old Testament, and joined together in the New, Gen. iv. 26, vi. 2. Psal. lxxxix. 26. Hosea i. 9, 10. John xx. 17. 2 Cor. vi. 16. 18. Rev. xxi. 7. So that to be a *God*, is in the language of Scripture, to be a father, at least in

the patriarchal period. And for God to be a father to one who is not created, or born, or begotten a son of God, is to be a father by adoption; and to be a father by adoption, is to give an inheritance in title, if not in possession; and the inheritance that God gives as a father, is dominion, bliss, glory, and immortality. Though it must be owned, that after Jehovah became the King of the Jews by covenant, and afterwards the Supreme King of Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles, God may signify king as well as father; and which of these that term signifies, must be determined by the context. See Psal. v. 2. lxviii. 24. cxlv. 1. John xx. 17. 2 Cor. vi. 16. 18. Rev. xxi. 3; compared with ver. 7.

13. Hence it is, that Christ proves the resurrection of good men (for about them is the question), to the Sadducees, from Moses's calling the "Lord," that is, "Jehovah, the God of Abraham," Luke xx. 37.

I shall only quote this passage historically, or as a proof of what the Jewish notions were about this matter; but not as holy writ, since I am here treating with the Deists, who do not allow that there is any such thing. In order to see the full force of our Saviour's argument, it must be observed,

1. That the question the Sadducees moved is about the resurrection of the man, and not about the existence of the man in a separate

state ; not only because the Sadducees are here described “ as denying the resurrection, ver. 27, but because the argument they use to support their opinion, relates to the man, and not to the separate state of the soul : it being an argument drawn from marriage, ver. 28—34. And the opinion of the Sadducees was, that souls perish with the bodies ; Joseph. de Bell. Jud. lib. ii. cap. 8. sect. 14.

2. That the question moved by the Sadducees is not about the resurrection of good and bad men, but of good men only. For the argument they bring against a resurrection supposes a state of happiness and enjoyment at the resurrection, which can only belong to the just. For their argument is, that there can be no resurrection of good men ; because seven brethren, who had one woman to wife successively in this life, could not all of them possibly have her to wife together, after the resurrection. And that the question moved by the Sadducees was about the resurrection of the just, is the more probable ; because the opinion of the Pharisees (which the Sadducees opposed) was, that “ though every soul was immortal, yet that the soul of the good only passed into another body ;” Joseph. de Bell. Jud. lib. ii. cap. 8. sect. 14.

3. That our Saviour’s argument to prove the resurrection, ver. 37, does not lie in these words,

“*I am the God of Abraham,*” because they are not so quoted here ; but Moses called *Jehovah the God of Abraham* ; and because, though our translators have rendered Matth. xxii. 32, “*I am the God,*” &c. ; yet that word is not in the original ; but only (*Εγὼ Θεός*) “*I the God of Abraham.*”

4. The force of the argument therefore lies in these words, that “the Lord (or Jehovah) is, or is called, the God of Abraham ;” that is, the Father of Abraham, namely, by adoption ; and that what God adopts us to, is immortality, and what accompanies immortality. For the first time that God promised to be a God to any one, is to Abraham and his seed, Gen. xvii. 7. And He there explains it, that what He means by calling Himself “the God of Abraham,” is, that He would give Abraham the everlasting possession of Canaan,” namely, after death. And Christ had just said before, that they which attain the world to come are “children or sons of God, being the children (or sons) of the resurrection.” And He adds, “God is not the God (or the Father) of the dead (that is, of good men that are dead, and are to continue so for ever, which was what the Sadducees meant by dead), but of the living ; (that is, of such good men as should live again ;) which was the point the Sadducees denied. For God cannot give immortality, &c. as an inheritance,

either in title or possession, to such as are irrecoverably dead ; but to such only as, when dead, shall be raised again. And without giving that inheritance in title or in possession, He cannot be a Father by adoption. And Christ immediately adds, “ All (that is, all good men, such as Abraham, &c.) live (or shall live) with Him ” (as the words may be rendered), namely, in the paradisaical state. If it had not been understood among the Jews, that God and Father were the same thing ; and that being a God of any one, implied adoption, or the inheritance of immortality, &c. to every one that was not a son by creation, birth, or generation ; the Sadducees would never have been silenced by this argument. But it is plain this was a notion received among the Jews, since, as the Pharisees triumph, so the Sadducees make no manner of reply, ver. 39, 40. And that it was so, farther appears from the Jewish writings both before Christ and since. In the book of Wisdom, ch. ii. 16. 20, it is said, “ He pronounced the latter end of the just blessed, and boasts that he has God for his *Father*. Let us cut him off with a shameful death. For if the just man be the *Son of God*, He will receive him.”—And, ver. 22, 23, “ They spake because they knew not the mysteries of God ; nor hoped for the reward of holiness, nor discerned the recompence of the blameless souls. For God

made *Man for incorruption*, and to be an *image of his own immortality*." And, ch. iii. 1. 4. 7, "The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God, and their hope is full of *immortality*. In the day of their visitation they shall shine : and they shall judge the nations, and have dominion over the people." And ch. v. 1. 4, 5, "Then shall the righteous stand with great boldness before the face of them that afflicted them, and they shall say, We fools counted his life madness, and his end to be without honour ; how is he numbered among the sons of God ! and his portion is with the saints." The seven sons mentioned in the Maccabees are still called "children of the flock of Abraham" by Josephus. And as the book of Maccabees still introduces them, declaring, "that they suffered under God's covenant of everlasting life ; and that God would raise them to it," 2 Macc. vii. 9. 11. 14. 23 ; so Josephus likewise introduces their mother comforting them with these words of Solomon, "Wisdom is a tree of life to them that do her will ;" and those of Ezekiel, "Shall these dry bones live ?" and with the words of God, in the song of Moses, "I kill, and I make alive." He also declares of these martyrs, "That dying for God, they also lived with God, as did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the patriarchs, and ran in the way of immortality." He speaks of "a reviviscence of all that observe

the law of Moses, though they die for it ;” and adds, “ That God hath granted them to receive a better life in reversion.” Joseph. de Macc. p. 1101. I. F. p. 1100. D. p. 1090. A. p. 1097. D. contra App. lib. ii. p. 1076. A. B.

The strongest passages might be brought to this purpose from the writings of the apostles, if those we have here to argue with would allow their authority.

Thus we have seen the import of the term God, as it stands by itself in Gen. xvii. 7, 8 ; and as it stands so, I think, it must appear clearly to every one to be a term equal to that of adopting Father, or the Giver of an everlasting inheritance, which must be one day or other an everlasting possession. But let us see if there is any thing farther in that text, which may shew us that that is the precise meaning of this term, and may also at the same time more particularly shew us, what that inheritance is, to which God adopted Abraham, and his spiritual seed.

Now, after the Almighty had said that He would be a God unto Abraham, and unto his seed after him ; He adds, ver. 8, “ And I will give unto thee, and unto thy seed after thee, the land of thy sojourning, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession.” By this we see, that the Almighty Himself explains the term God to be the Giver of a possession, or

of an inheritance in possession, to Abraham and his seed. And, to shew that this is added to explain the term God, He also farther adds, “And I will be their God;” as much as to say, “And thus it is that I will be the God of Abraham and of his seed, namely, by giving them Canaan for an everlasting possession.” The words, “after him,” relate to “seed” (who must be after a parent), or to the grant, which is made originally to Abraham, after or through whom it comes to the seed, and not as an original grant made to them: but these words, “after him,” do not relate to the time of their enjoying this possession; for that will be, not after Abraham, but together with him. For, as our Saviour says, “they shall come from the North, and from the East, and from the West, and from the South, and sit down (with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) in the kingdom of God,” Luke xiii. 28, 29.

A shorter possession than an everlasting one would not have suited the bounty and munificence of this great adopting Father of good men. This shews, that this possession is to be given to Abraham, and to his seed, at their recovering from death. In such a state of things as that in which Abraham lived, it was not possible for him to have enjoyed an everlasting possession. Nor has God as yet given him “any possession” in Canaan, much less “the

whole land for a possession." He had indeed a small field for a burying-place; but that he purchased: nor did he seem to possess his burying-place, till his sons buried him there. That is in the most proper sense the possession of a burying-place. And so Moses himself considers it, in some part, in relation to Sarah's being buried there, Gen. xxiii. 19, 20. Yet sure, no word of God, much less a covenant, a solemn covenant, a covenant that He, by way of emphasis, calls "my covenant," ver. 2. 4. 7, and "an everlasting covenant," ver. 7, shall "fall to the ground." All this shews, that Abraham must be raised up to have this everlasting possession: nay indeed, God had expressly told Abraham, before this appearance, namely, chap. xv. 13—17, that he should not have any possession of Canaan in this life, nor any of his descendants till the fourth generation, and till some of his posterity had served in Egypt: yet God says here, chap. xvii. 7, 8, not only that He will give Canaan for an everlasting possession to Abraham, but to his seed also "in their (or, which was the same, in all their) generations." It follows then, that the everlasting possession, that God here promises to Abraham, and to all his seed, that is, his imitators (such as Isaac was), ver. 18—22, Rom. iv. 12—17, ix. 7, 8, Gal. iii. 7. 29, in all their generations, is a possession to be given them

after death. Abraham therefore, soon after this covenant, planted a grove, and called there on the name of Jehovah as “the everlasting God,” or Father, or Giver of Canaan for an everlasting possession, Gen. xxi. 33. And hence come the expressions, so frequent in the Old Testament, of everlasting covenant, way, mercy, kindness, love, joy, salvation, light, portion, and inheritance. This is God’s covenant of everlasting life, mentioned in the Maccabees. And this is the mercy for which Zacharias thanks God, in his sublime hymn, for raising up Jesus, to perform to the fathers, Abraham, &c. Luke i. 37, 38. See the original. And so our Saviour argues from the very meaning of the terms, “the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” Luke xx. 37, 38. St. Paul likewise argues from this grant to Abraham, and his seed, Acts xxvi. 6—9, when he says to King Agrippa, “And now I stand, and am judged for the hope of the promise (that is, of the thing promised) made of God to the fathers.” What the promise (or thing promised) is, we learn, ver. 8, namely, the resurrection of the dead to everlasting life. “For,” says he, “why should it be thought impossible for God to raise the dead?” Nay, he farther says, ver. 7, that “to that promise (or to that thing promised) our twelve tribes, serving God day and night, hope to come:” and “for

that hope he was accused of the Jews." See Acts xxiii. 6. That is therefore evidently the hope of a resurrection to everlasting life. This is the promise which none of the Old Testament or the Apocryphal worthies have obtained, Heb. xi. 39, and than which Christians have still a better thing provided, ver. 40. This is "the eternal life," to which "God chose the Gentiles, *πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου*," Eph. i. 4, and which "God that cannot lie promised, *πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων*," before the secular ages, or jubilees;" that is, before the Jewish state began, Tit. i. 2, 3. And where was this thing, namely, everlasting life, promised to the fathers, so as to raise the hope of obtaining what was so promised to the fathers in the twelve tribes, and in Paul as a Jew, and speaking to Agrippa a Jew, but in this promise made by God to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 7, 8, and which was afterwards renewed to Isaac and Jacob, and to Moses at the bush, and repeated and confirmed in subsequent revelations to the Israelites, of "entering into rest?" As also of the kingdom of a son of David; a kingdom of peace, plenty, righteousness, and life, the inseparable attendants of righteousness? All which subsequent promises are in virtue of this original promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, "heirs with him of the same promise," Heb. xi. 9.

Moreover, God specifies what and where this

everlasting possession shall be; namely, Canaan, “the land of his sojourning:” a land, that was then “as the garden of the Lord,” Gen. xiii. 10. The boundaries whereof are set forth, Gen. xv. 18—21, containing all that great tract of country that lies between Euphrates and the Nile: a country fit to receive Abraham’s numerous imitators of all times, and of all nations; which the garden of Eden could not have been, if it had not been destroyed by the flood.

But this great country, in its then state, could not have been enjoyed by Abraham, or his imitators, as an everlasting possession. This may farther serve to shew, that this promise is yet to be accomplished to them at “the times of respiration, and of the restitution of all things” to their original happy state; which, as St. Peter says, “God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets ever since the world began,” Acts iii. 21, when Canaan will be indeed as Eden, the garden of God; that is, as it is described, Isa. xxxv. 1, 2, lv. 13, lxv. 25, when, “instead of the thorn, shall come up the fir-tree; and instead of the brier, shall come up the myrtle-tree; when the desert shall blossom as a rose, when it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; when the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon;—when the wolf and the

lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like an ox, and dust shall be the serpent's meat ; and finally, when its metropolis shall be a city built of precious stones, the most glorious and durable of all materials, chap. liv. 11, 12. Such a city, in such an heavenly country, was the expectation of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; as we learn from Heb. xi. 10—16, under the description of “ the city which hath foundations,” of “ the continuing city,” Heb. xiii. 14, and of “ the heavenly Jerusalem,” xii. 22. In the expectation of this city, they dwelt in tents, xi. 9. Nor was it the expectation of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob only, but of good men all along among the Jews ; as we learn not only from Isaiah, in the places just quoted, but from Tobit, chap. xiii. 16—18. This city and this country is, by St. John, said to be “ the holy city, and the new Jerusalem, that he saw come down from heaven on the new earth, prepared like a bride for her bridegroom ; when he that sits on the throne says, Behold, I make all things new : and he that overcometh shall inherit them ; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son,” Rev. xxi. 5. 7. And that the possession of this heavenly city, in this heavenly country, may be everlasting, or of long duration, the tree of life is then to be in the midst of the paradise of God, chap. ii. 7, and on each side of the river that runs

through the New Jerusalem, chap. xxii. 2. 14. St. John describes this city agreeably to the manner in which Isaiah and Tobit had described it before, only with much greater particularity and distinctness, Rev. xxi. xxii. 1—6. By this description, every one will see that this is called an heavenly city and an heavenly country, not because they are to be in heaven, but because they come down from it.

Upon the whole, it appears by all that has been said, that God here promised Abraham a happier state at his resurrection than our first parents had forfeited for themselves and their posterity: Canaan, a large country; large in itself, and to be sure large enough to hold Abraham and all his imitators; since they are to be raised in some sort like to the angels, Luke xv. 36, and are to be in a paradisaical state, as Adam was before the fall; but “without marrying or being given in marriage,” Luke xx. 35. Nor are Abraham and his seed only to have such a country, but a city in it: “a city whose Maker and Builder is God:” and in which it is natural to suppose that they are to enjoy the most exalted conversation and society; as we may learn from Heb. xii. 22—25, if this were a proper place to consider that text. In these particulars, therefore, Abraham’s everlasting possession in Canaan will exceed Adam’s in Eden; which was a garden, without

a city, and with little society ; and to be dressed by those who were to inhabit it. Gen. ii. 15. See the Dissertation, No. V.

SECTION XX.—*Extensive application of the term, the Children of Abraham.*

The Promise was not granted to Abraham, and his descendants alone, but to all the families of the earth, who should become his spiritual seed ; to all who should imitate him in his faith and obedience.

That sons, or children, sometimes signify imitators in Scripture, and even many ages before, has been already shewn. That seed, Gen. xvii. 7, 8, must not be taken there in the letter, but in the spirit or figure, for all those “who shall tread in the steps” of their common father, of what nation soever they be, will appear very clearly, if we consider the place with attention. For, 1, the promise is to give Abraham an everlasting possession of all the land of Canaan, ver. 8. Yet God had told Abraham, ch. xv. 15, that he should not possess the land in his lifetime. Nor had he any possession there at all from God’s immediate donation ; or any other, but the possession of a burying-place, which he himself purchased. He knew therefore that this possession of all the land of Canaan, promised here to himself, must be a possession that

was to be an everlasting possession, which is a personal thing; and which must be carefully distinguished from an inheritance, that a man may indeed be said to have to him and to his heirs for ever; even though he only have that right of inheritance in reversion, and never have it in possession at all. Now therefore as Abraham knew, that this everlasting possession he was to have after death: especially since it of all the land of Canaan was to be his after death, he must understand it to have belonged to his seed after death too; which would plainly shew him, that by his seed here, he was to understand his imitators, and not his descendants. This would likewise farther appear to him from hence, that God here promises this everlasting possession of Canaan to his seed “in their generations,” ver. 7, or which is the same thing, in *all* their generations: whereas God had told him, ch. xv. 16, that none of his seed should have any possession in Canaan, till the fourth generation. See paraphrase and notes, Dissert. No. V. on Gen. xvii. 5, and on ver. 8.

2. The condition of the promise was, “Walk before me, and be thou perfect,” ver. 1. Now as Abraham understood, that this was the condition, on the performance of which alone the everlasting possession of all the land of Canaan would continue to him; he must of course understand, that it was only on the same condi-

tion that it would continue to others. The promise of this everlasting possession was not absolute, as the promise was, ch. xv. 16, which ran thus; that “in the fourth generation *they shall* come hither again.” The promise therefore of the everlasting possession of Canaan could not belong to any of his seed, that did not perform the condition. And would Abraham imagine that that promise would not belong to any of the other families of the earth, who should perform this condition? such as Melchizedek, Lot, Job, &c. purely because they did not descend from him? Surely he would be far from arrogating any thing so presumptuously to himself; or from imputing any thing so injurious to the Almighty. For shall the Judge of all the earth do wrong, and become a respecter of persons? or, shall not He that is unchangeable, ever bear the same respects to the same objects? Accordingly God tells Abraham, that this his everlasting covenant, or the covenant to give the everlasting possession of Canaan on walking before God, and being perfect, should be made with Isaac after him (an imitator of him), and not with Ishmael, ver. 19. 21, (who profanely mocked at this son of the promise, Gen. xxi. 9, 10, Gal. iv. 29) and at his everlasting possession.

3. The promise is not only to give the everlasting possession of Canaan to Abraham.

but to his seed. I have already observed that sons or children sometimes signify imitators in the antediluvian period. And both the former arguments drawn from this chapter, prove it must be understood so here. But I will now in the third place farther shew, that imitators is more remarkably the meaning of the word *seed*, through the period, that is now under our consideration, wherever the connection does not necessarily oblige us to interpret it of natural descendants. (See No. V. The paraphrase and notes on Gen. xvii. 8.) Thus is it to be understood in that famous promise made to Abraham, “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,” Gen. xxii. 18; and in the parallel promises made to Isaac, Gen. xxvi. 4, and to Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 14. In all which places seed does not signify natural descendants or even Jesus Christ himself, one of their natural descendants; but signifies imitators: the sense being, “And in (being, or becoming) thy seed (that is, thy imitators, in walking before me, and being perfect) all the nations of the earth shall be blessed;” (that is, shall have the curse removed from them, and the original blessing restored to them.) That the meaning of seed in this promise is Abraham’s imitators, and not Jesus Christ, one of his natural descendants, as has been hitherto thought, is plain from these considerations: 1. That the New

Testament writers never quote this promise as applicable to Jesus Christ; which they could hardly have omitted, if by seed in these places Jesus Christ had been intended. Nay, they are so far from this, that none of them ever mention Jesus Christ's being a son of Abraham, but only in his genealogy, Matth. i. 1, Luke iii. 34. Whereas they often mention Jesus Christ's being a son of David; he being very often prophesied of under that appellation in the time of David, and ever after, as long as prophecy continued among the Jews. 2. That the New Testament writers ever interpret seed in those promises that were made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the places in Genesis, just now quoted, to be imitators, and not descendants; see Rom. iv. 12—18, ix. 7—13, Gal. iii. 6—11. 16. 19. 26—29. As also St. Peter in like manner calls the imitators of Sarah, her daughters, 1 Pet. iii. 6. 3. Because the New Testament writers make no manner of difference between God's saying, "*In thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed:*" which yet could not be thought the same precise sense, unless they understood it thus: "*In thee, that is, in imitating thee—and in thy seed, that is, in being thy imitators—shall all the families of the earth be blessed:*" or thus: in my blessing thee, shall all the nations of the earth be blessed also, that imitate thee: which is in effect the same. See

Gal. iii. 7, 8, (quoted from Gen. xii. 3. xviii. 18) compared with ver. 16. 29. It must be owned, indeed, that St. Paul in one place, namely, Gal. iii. 16, says, “And to thy seed, which is *Christ* ;” by which Jesus Christ has been hitherto universally understood. But *Christ* there, does not signify Jesus Christ ; but the people anointed by the Spirit : or, in other words, the children, seed, or imitators of Abraham, both Jews and Gentiles, ver. ult.

SECTION XXI.—*On the appointment of the rite of Circumcision.*

Still further to encourage and strengthen the faith of Abraham, God was pleased to give him a name, which denoted the matter of his promise, and to appoint circumcision, as the seal of that promise : or, in other words, as a farther assurance of the adoption to an earthly, as well as a heavenly inheritance. Circumcision therefore was enjoined to those only, who were entitled to both these inheritances. Circumcision, then, must be considered as the badge of God’s visible family in the literal race of Abraham, and of them only, or, as a mark, in their flesh, and a sign and seal that God would give them the double adoption, which He had promised them.

That it was a mark in their flesh, is sufficiently plain.

That it was to be in the flesh of all the males that were a settled part of Abraham's family, is as plain ; because it was enjoined to Abraham, to his sons, to him that was born in his house, namely, the sons of his servants, and to him that was bought with his money, from any stranger ; and for the future, all males that were born to him, to his sons, or to his slaves, were to be circumcised the eighth day. See Gen. xvii. 10—15. 23—27. From hence it is plain, that circumcision was not enjoined to any imitator of his, that was not of his family ; or to an hired servant, who was but a fluctuating and an unsettled part of it.

That it was a sign to Abraham's family, to distinguish it from all other families, is also plain ; for that is the meaning of its being a token, or a sign, as is evident from the use of the word *sign* generally throughout Moses's writings. So God always says of sabbaths, and circumcision, that he had given them to the Israelites for signs ; they being the two things that peculiarly distinguished them from all other nations. Exod. xxxi. 13. 17. Ezek. xx. 12. 20.

That consequently it was enjoined only to such as were capable of a double adoption, namely, to a temporal, and to an everlasting

possession, is likewise plain; because it was for that reason that Ishmael, who was to have Idumæa, was to be circumcised, as well as Isaac, whose descendants were to have Canaan for a temporal possession; and who both themselves, and each of their descendants, were capable of the everlasting possession, as they were capable of being imitators of Abraham.

Lastly, That it was a seal of God's covenant to Abraham and his seed, we learn from Rom. v. 4; that is, a confirmation that God would fulfil His promise to Abraham and his seed, on his and their righteousness; or on his continuing to walk before God, and be perfect, as he had hitherto done. And though it was immediately a seal of the promise of the everlasting possession, to Abraham and his family only, yet the promise, however, would continue to such of Abraham's spiritual seed as were not of his family, and consequently were not subject to circumcision, if they were righteous before God, as Abraham was (the true condition of the promise): the promise of the everlasting possession having been for that reason made to Abraham in uncircumcision, as St. Paul observes, Rom. iv. 11. And circumcision, though a sign or badge peculiar to the males of the fixed part of Abraham's family alone, and belonging as a seal immediately only to them; yet by way of deduction and inference, might serve as a seal and

confirmation of the truth of this great promise to all Abraham's spiritual seed, of whatever other family and nation they were, Rom. iv. 11—18. For if the seal made it more sure to Abraham and his spiritual seed among his descendants, it would confirm it by way of inference to his spiritual seed, who were not his descendants. For whatever confirmed it to Abraham and his imitators among his own seed or descendants, would confirm it to Abraham's imitators, who were not his seed or descendants. And the one seed being now come, consisting not only of the believers of Abraham's circumcised family, but of the believers of every other uncircumcised family or nation whatsoever; without any manner of distinction, of Jew or Gentile, male or female, bond or free (now that God's family is no longer confined within the narrow bounds of Abraham's), and the one seed being now also all baptized into Christ Jesus, and having put Him on (as Christians used to do new clothes after baptism, Gal. iii. 27, 28), we have all, I say, not barely so much of the seal, or that degree of the confirmation of the truth of the promise, that circumcision gave to Abraham, and all his spiritual seed; but a new sign and seal, that if we die to sin, as we are buried under water, and rise to newness of life, as we are raised out of the water, we shall be raised again from the dead. and possess the paradisaical

Canaan in virtue of the promise made to Abraham, Gal. iii. 29. And after enjoying Canaan in a paradisaical state with him for a long term, called in the Revelations “a thousand years,” shall, in bodies like to our blessed Saviour’s, at last, ascend “to our Father and His Father, and to our God and His God ; and so be ever with the Lord.”

As to the original of circumcision, which has been so much controverted among men of the first rank in literature ; I shall only say, that there is not the least appearance in Moses’s history of its having been ever used by any family or nation before Abraham. Nor do I see any facts or testimonies from other sufficient authorities, that can oblige one to admit it. I think on the contrary there is a strong fact on the other side ; namely, that the Philistines were uncircumcised. See Patrick on Gen. xvii. 11. And till I am obliged to admit that circumcision was in use before Abraham, I am not at all disposed to do it. Most of the reasons one way and the other are stated by Spencer, de Legg. Heb. cap. v. sect. 4.

That Abraham might have the more strong consolation in the lively hopes of this double inheritance (and of one of them, namely, the earthly, as a pledge of the other, namely, the paradisaical, called the heavenly), God was pleased at last in infinite condescension to con-

firm them by an oath.¹ And to the intent that the vigour of these hopes might be the better preserved, on which their performance of the condition so much depended, and consequently the performance of the promise on God's part, God saw fit to repeat these promises (which He had so solemnly confirmed to Abraham) to Isaac, and to Jacob afterwards ;² heirs together with him of the same promise.³

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their descendants, being the first family of all the families of the earth that received any express promise, that God would "bless them," by removing all the curse, and restoring the original blessing; that He "would count their faith for righteousness," and "be their God;" or, in other words, that He would be their Father, and that they should be His children; "theirs was the adoption, the promises, and the covenants, and the inheritances;"⁴ hence it is that God calls Israel, or the children of Israel (the descendants of Abraham), His son, and His first-born:⁵ Israel and his sons being adopted to Canaan, the inheritance of the first-born; while Ishmael had only Idumæa, and Esau only Mount Seir, for a possession.⁶

¹ Gen. xxii. 16.

² Ibid. xxvi. 34. xxvii. 29. xxviii. 4.

³ Heb. xi. 9.

⁴ Rom. x. 4. Heb. xi. 8. 13.

⁵ Exod. iv. 22.

⁶ Deut. xi. 5.

And hence it is that God is also the Father of all Abraham's spiritual seed: "the seed (or people) that was to be born;" or, "the seed that was to serve Him, and that was to be accounted to him for a generation;" ¹ God having adopted them from being the children of men, and of the devil, heirs of death and the curse, to the paradisaical or heavenly inheritance, by His free grace, in Christ Jesus our Lord, as children of Abraham, who is the heir of this new world,² and "the father of all the faithful."³

Abraham being the first to whom this blessing was expressly promised after the curse that had been pronounced on the fall, "blessing and cursing" are afterwards often used in Scripture as terms equal to life and happiness, and to misery and death;⁴ and always signify these in part, if not in whole.

This blessing is expressed in other words of Scripture, as "forgiving," or covering, or "not imputing sin;"⁵ and "counting faith for righteousness:"⁶ and in the New Testament it is called "justifying."⁷ The reason of these expressions is plain, since whosoever is "rectus

¹ Psal. xxii. 30, 31. xxiv. 6.

² Rom. iv. 13.

³ Ver. 16, 17. Gal. iii. 27, 28, 29.

⁴ See Deut. xxvii. 14. 26, and xxviii. 2—14. Matt. xxv. 34. Rom. iv. 9. Gal. iii. 8, 9, 10. 12. 14.

⁵ Psal. xxxii. 2. ⁶ Gen. xv. 6. ⁷ Rom. iv. 3. Gal. iii. 8.

in curia" is entitled to all the privileges and advantages that belong to the jurisdiction of that court; or rather to all the privileges and blessings which belong to the subjects of that kingdom which erects or constitutes that court.

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